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EVANGELISM IN THE HOME CHURCH

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Princeton, New Jersey

ABINGDON-COKESBURY PRESS

New York • Nashville

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PRINTED IN THE U. S. A.

DEDICATED
TO
THE MINISTER
OF
THE HOME CHURCH

FOREWORD

The aim here is practical. The stress is on the word "How?" Many a minister is asking: "How can I promote evangelism today? How can I carry out the program devised in the city skyscraper or seminary classroom?" When he reads books and hears lectures he becomes enthusiastic about winning souls, but when he tries to translate lofty ideals into workable plans he does not know how.

The pastor in view is neither a genius nor a giant. But he longs to win souls. He wishes for counsel based on the experience of other ministers. Have they discovered any kind of evangelism that will work today? The answer here is in terms of the congregation. In churches large and small pastors are finding that the best unit for evangelistic work is the home parish, and that the leader sent from God is the minister.

There is also need of soul winning throughout each denomination. Among the various boards and agencies none is more needful than the "Unit of Evangelism," which may bear some other title. If later I seem to find fault with such statesmanship, that is never my intention. My purpose is rather to urge that the minister at Cream Ridge or Middletown feel free to change the plans sent out from New York or Nashville.

"Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." In the words of Douglas Horton, Secretary of the Congregational Christian Churches, "Evangelism is the art of allowing

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oneself to be used as a channel by which the Holy Spirit communicates Himself to others." If any pastor wishes to guide laymen as winners of souls, the Spirit is waiting to show him how. Better still, the Spirit is ready to supply the power. Best of all, the Spirit is eager to bring the harvest.

All these convictions have come through my studies in the history of evangelism and revivals, beginning with the Old Testament. But in this book the discussion starts with today. Under God, the hope for our world rests with the Church. But, alas, the Church is not ready. It needs to be revived. Revival comes best as the result of evangelism. That, in turn, should begin at the home base. Another name for the book might be "Revival through Evangelism."

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CHAPTER I

CURRENT TRENDS

THROUGHOUT the Protestant church there is a call for the winning of souls. There is likewise need of Christian nurture. Under these two headings one can include almost everything done in the local church. In this book the stress is on soul winning, with some emphasis on nurture. The idea is to strengthen the weak place in the line. As a rule the parish church devotes more attention to nurture than evangelism. Fortunately, the two go together, hand in hand. In fact, each helps the other. "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."

In both lines of work the unit ought to be the home church. The leader ought to be the minister. In the ensuing pages there will be much about the layman as a winner of souls, but the chief stress will be on the pastor as a leader of laymen. This is what one means by congregational evangelism. Under God, the coming of a revival—in the Biblical sense of that abused word—depends on evangelism in the home community. The effectiveness of the work depends chiefly on the ability and leadership of the minister.

Before we go further we should get our bearings. In writing about soul winning and nurture one can get lost in the fog, or else start a fight. But why should Christians quarrel? There is no desire to exalt the winning of souls at

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the expense of their nurture in the Lord. In the light of the New Testament the two ways of working are equally essential to the growth and very existence of the Church. Neither is there a desire to frown on any method the Lord uses in bringing human beings to a saving experience of redeeming love. According to Henry B. Trimble, Dean of Candler School of Theology, Emory University, "There is no bad way to make a Christian."

What, then, is the situation in the Protestant church? The general impression is one of perplexity and confusion, sometimes approaching despair. Never since the Reformation has it been so difficult for the minister and officers of the home church to plan their work and keep their balance. Without entering into all the perplexities we shall think of some that relate to preaching, to soul winning, and to Christian nurture. Although these activities are directly in line with the New Testament, it is possible to stumble while striving to be faithful. "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

TENDENCIES IN PREACHING

In the work of the pulpit fashions change. A generation ago the parish minister had to be on guard against "revivalism." Now the tendency is to keep away from everything relating to revivals and evangelism. A simple way to follow these trends is to study the annual Lyman Beecher Lectures at Yale. The first three series were by Henry Ward Beecher. In the second he devoted four periods to the subject of revivals. There was little emphasis on Christian nurture. The same call for soul winning came from the other lecturers in those days, notably Phillips Brooks, Robert William Dale, and Bishop Matthew Simpson.

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Such were the ideals that sent our fathers into the ministry. After the turn of the century there began to be a change. Starting in 1902, three of the next five series were on the application of Christianity to social problems. There was need of such teaching, as there is today. At the same time there was stress on evangelism. This term began to replace the word revival.

During the decade beginning with 1910, four of the lecturers called on the Church to give evangelism the right of way. With slightly differing shades of evangelical belief, these four divines, Charles E. Jefferson and John Henry Jowett, Charles Silvester Horne and Henry Sloane Coffin, voiced the spirit of Protestant preaching before the signing of the Armistice in 1918.

Since that time, one scarcely knows why, there has been little emphasis on the winning of souls. Among the series of late none is more worthy than that by George A. Buttrick, *Jesus Came Preaching* (1931), or that by Charles C. Morrison, *What is Christianity?* (1940). While the two books differ in purpose and content, as well as style, either repays careful study. One voices the spirit of the pulpit in the past few years. The other seeks to blaze the trail for tomorrow. If in one the result is a concern for preaching the Gospel, and in the other an emphasis on the Church, everyone should thank God.

Neither book leaves the impression that soul winning is a vital part of the Christian religion. The volume by Buttrick makes practically no reference to evangelism or revivals. No chapter stresses either idea. The index contains no such references. Among the reviews, which were laudatory, there was scarcely a word about this omission. Evidently it is typical of today.

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The lecturer believes in evangelism. He engages in it himself, and also leads his laymen. His congregation is known far and near for soul winning and nurture. In addressing students he doubtless takes these things for granted, but do his young hearers? If they enter the ministry with the ideals set forth in this book, are they concerned about the winning of souls?

Fortunately, every minister has access to the New Testament. From it he can take his ideals. In it he will find that the word translated preaching refers to evangelism. This is the contention of Charles H. Dodd, at Cambridge University, a scholar second to none in New Testament learning. In his book *The Apostolic Preaching and its Development* (1936) he shows that the writers of the New Testament employ the word *kerygma*, or preaching, to indicate speaking to the unsaved, and that they use other terms to describe teachings addressed to believers.

"When Jesus came preaching" His message was the Kingdom. His purpose was to win recruits. He likewise taught, both publicly and privately. For example, in "the training of the twelve" He was speaking to followers and friends. But the sacred writers do not refer to the instruction of Christians as preaching. The evangelists reserve this expression for the winning of souls. "Evangelism is the winning of men to acknowledge Christ as their Saviour and King, so that they give themselves to His service in the fellowship of His Church." These are the words of William Temple, Archbishop of York. He is perhaps the foremost living writer about theology and the Church.

This is what "Jesus came preaching," and what the apostles kept proclaiming. The matter is more than a study in words. But the words help us see that soul winning

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occupies a larger place in the New Testament than in current books about preaching. Search the Scriptures and see whether these things are so!

The same anomaly appears in most divinity schools. Those who teach base almost everything on the Bible, at least the New Testament. But they let other things good crowd out evangelism. In response to an inquiry about the method of conducting a course in the subject, the dean of a famous divinity school replies that the course has been discontinued. In another large seminary, with all sorts of religious fare, the professor of preaching offers an elective course in evangelism, a subject in which he is not especially at home.

Is it any wonder that young ministers leave our schools of theology without a passion for winning souls? When these pastors get their bearings they feel that the seminary curriculum needs to be revised. They wish that they had learned how to interpret the Bible and how to use it in soul winning, as well as in Christian nurture. This is what other young men are learning in Bible training schools. Of course those students should receive a broader education, the broader the better. The minister can never know too much truth. Zeal does not atone for ignorance.

MOVEMENTS IN EVANGELISM

Whatever the reason, the average church is not trying to evangelize the community. The pastor and lay officers are mending the nets that the fathers used in deep-sea fishing. Once in a while the overseers of the Lord's work become concerned about the low estate of spiritual life in the congregation. This feeling is worthy. But the resulting efforts lead to nothing lasting. They are self-centered and spasmodic. True religion is altruistic and habitual.

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Some time ere long the pastor will see that the way to quicken the spiritual lives of Christian people is to get them concerned about the souls of their friends and neighbors. To the leaders in the home church the Master is calling, "Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught." As in New Testament times, the way to quicken the hearts of God's people is to lead them in evangelizing the community. Then there will be a parish revival, somewhat like Pentecost, though perhaps on a smaller scale.

By the parish one means the community for whose spiritual welfare the Lord holds the church responsible. If there are several congregations representing divergent hues of Protestantism, the Lord does not hold any of them responsible for the entire neighborhood. Perhaps they ought to unite. Meanwhile, working in harmony, each in a different fashion, they should present the claims of Christ to all the unsaved and unchurched.

As a rule the local church can do this work best when it proceeds alone. This is the conviction of Canon Peter Green, at Manchester, England. His book *The Man of God* (1935) is one of the most helpful in the field of pastoral theology. He urges that every "mission" be parochial. A number of neighboring churches may be doing the same thing at the same time, but each should have a mission of its own. According to Canon Green, a mission is "the effort of an entire congregation to convert outsiders and to draw them into the fellowship of the church." When the book was written the community in Manchester was going down. Church families were moving out to the suburbs every month. But the parish was growing yearly in numbers and spiritual power. However, there were other

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ways of soul winning, continuously, with an occasional mission. This is congregational evangelism.

Evangelism leads to revival. Within the home church what is the distinction between the two? The words evangelism and revival are often used interchangeably. In this book evangelism refers to the winning of souls; revival, to the increase of fervor among those who believe. As for the unseemly aspects of such movements in the past, a convenient label is "revivalism." Throughout the book the dominant idea is that evangelism leads to revival, and that there need be no revivalism.

The spirit of evangelism ought to pervade all our worship and teaching, as well as our other activities, much as the salt permeates the sea. As for ways and means, the realm is full of mystery. This is part of what our Lord teaches about the new birth: "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit."

Part of the mystery has to do with varieties of Christian experience. There are more than twelve gates into the City of God. We shall not have time to mention them all. The main thing is to seek out the unsaved and bring each of them through one of those gates. This is what one means by "recruiting." The exercise is so vigorous that it keeps the child of God well and strong in spirit. The call today is for "the religion of healthy-mindedness."

If any minister is holding back because he feels unworthy, let him lift up his heart. "We have this treasure in earthen vessels." The treasure is the Gospel. The earthen vessels are the minister and the laymen. If the light is to shine it must be through workers who are far from perfect. If

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the Lord had to wait for vessels of gold He would need some radically different way of evangelizing the world.

Any man whom God calls to be a minister can become a pastoral evangelist. Even if a man has not been properly trained, he can learn how to lead in soul winning. He and his lay friends together can learn to do while doing. If he has a program for evangelizing the community he will find some of the laymen eager to share in the adventure. Ere long others will catch the contagion. The going will never be easy. The laborers will always be few. The harvest may come slowly. But in due season he shall reap if he faints not.

How, then, shall he start? Shall he call in a professional evangelist? As a rule, no! During the past decade or two the trend has been away from using imported leadership. There has even been abuse of the itinerant soul winner. Some criticisms have gone further than the facts warrant. For a sarcastic caricature read *Elmer Gantry* (1927) by Sinclair Lewis, author of *Main Street*. But why not think of professional evangelism at its best, not its worst? For the best, look at Dwight L. Moody.

Among other itinerant evangelists every lover of church history has his favorites. Those of the writer include George Whitefield, William Booth, Charles G. Finney, J. Wilbur Chapman, and Gipsy Smith, both father and son. Aside from Moody, the most famous professional evangelist was William A. Sunday. Opinions about him differ sharply. Some of us came so close to his work that we are not able to appraise it impartially. But no one dares suggest that he was an Elmer Gantry.

The passing of Billy Sunday seems to have marked the end of an era when a traveling evangelist with his corps of expert

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associates could erect a barnlike "tabernacle" and settle down for two months, so as to shake an entire city, such as Pittsburgh or Columbus, as well as the surrounding territory. Unfortunately, many of the wholesome effects melted away almost as fast as the snow through which thousands of eager pilgrims wended their way to hear "Billy" lambaste the churches and the clergy. When the shouting and tumult died, the mud remained. In each parish the load fell back where it had been before, on the shoulders of the home pastor.

The objections to such imported leadership have become well known. They have to do with professionalism and stress on money, emotionalism and mob psychology. For an extreme statement of these and other strictures, with special reference to the "Kentucky Revival," which began in 1800, see *Primitive Traits in Religious Revivals* (1905), by Frederick M. Davenport. Without accepting such criticisms at face value, the parish minister today looks askance at most professional evangelists.

The tendency is likewise away from mass meetings. The reference is to union gatherings under professional leadership imported from without. There is still a place for group evangelism in the local church. Sometimes the unit may be a number of neighboring congregations. But the trend is away from the huge heterogeneous assemblies which some of us used to enjoy. In the National Preaching Mission, for example, the gatherings were large and the speaking worthy. But the attendance was confined to members of co-operating churches, as well as ministers and laymen from near and far. The resulting impression among the local clergy is that mass meetings do not reach the unsaved and unchurched.

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The tendency is also away from methods employed in a rescue mission. In its own sphere the best of such work is above reproach. In this kind of service some of us have had little experience, only enough to show that it requires skill, as well as grace. Those who excel are benefactors of mankind. But their methods differ from those of the minister and laymen in a normal parish. The matter is timely. Especially now when liquor is being sold everywhere, there is need of the city mission. But often one hears the suggestion that it be used as a training school for seminary students. Surely every prospective pastor should have something corresponding to the internship of the medical student, but the conditions should be more normal than in a city mission. The work there is highly specialized.

A more recent trend is toward *casework evangelism*. This is for "lost sheep"; that is, men and women whom one can scarcely classify. Each of them calls for personal treatment by an expert in disorders of the soul. The title "Casework Evangelism" seems to have originated with Charles R. Zahnizer. His book under this heading means much the same as *Pastoral Psychiatry* (1938), by John S. Bonnell. The former work has to do with the soul that is steeped in sin and needs to be saved. The latter book is concerned with the soul that is sick and needs to be healed. But neither writer would draw these lines sharply. The facts about a soul that is sick are far from simple. As a rule the malady is due to causes that are sinful, but this is not always the case. Whatever the rootage, any such disorder requires the time and attention of an expert.

The parish minister should know about such matters. He should likewise leave them alone. However, he should be able to recognize the symptoms of an impending mental

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collapse, so as to refer the ailing friend to a Christian specialist with a sound medical training. Otherwise a little learning may be perilous, both to patient and pastor. The minister who has dabbled in this art only long enough to master the vocabulary may become a quack. He may drive away his best parishioners and forfeit the esteem of the medical fraternity. Let the clergyman be a clergyman!

For a wholesome discussion of these matters read *The Art of Ministering to the Sick* (1936), by R. C. Cabot and R. L. Dicks. Before his retirement Cabot was the most popular teacher at the Harvard Medical School. He would have seconded the warning of a still more distinguished medical professor, Sir William Osler, of Johns Hopkins and Oxford. As the son of a Canadian clergyman this brilliant teacher is writing about a profession that he esteems: "The less the clergy have to do with the bodily complaints of neurasthenic and hysterical persons the better for their peace of mind and for the reputation of the clergy."

There is little room for question concerning *visitation evangelism*. This is for "wandering sheep." These men and women live in the community surrounding the church, but they have strayed from the faith of their fathers. To the outward view these neighbors are not vicious or debased. At heart they may be worldly rather than depraved. Still they are in need of what the Lord Jesus alone can give.

Worldliness, as Frederick W. Robertson teaches in a sermon so named, means living for things, not for God; for self, not for others; for time, not for eternity. So alluring is the world, so deceptive is its spell, so strong is its hold on the human heart, that the worldling may be harder to win than the person who is down and out. Nevertheless, it is possible to enlist for Christ and the local church

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the worldliest man in the community. It is even possible to reach the heart of the worldliest woman. The joys that the world affords do not satisfy the heart. Often the spirit of the worldling is wistful; sometimes it is cynical; occasionally it is desperate. Many a person who seems to be content with husks is eager for a vision of life as an adventure of faith. Whether he knows it or not, such a man is hungering for Christ. Hosts of these folk are about us in the community. Religiously they are as sheep without a shepherd.

For the sake of wandering sheep Arthur E. Kernahan devised a plan that has become known through his books—for example, *Visitation Evangelism* (1925). While his methods differ from the proposal in this volume, they are worthy of study. As a rule visitation evangelism calls for leadership by an expert imported from without, and for co-operation among local churches. These methods have brought a blessing to one community after another. Nevertheless, the present writer feels that there is a more excellent plan. For one thing, it operates continuously.

Another promising movement is *radio evangelism*, which as yet is in its swaddling clothes. This activity is possible for only the exceptional minister. Facilities for broadcasting are expensive. If there were money enough in the church treasury there might be no wave length available. Even now the voice of the Lord's herald is often drowned out by the clamor of the world. The radio preacher seems to overestimate the extent of his "vast nation-wide audience."

If some of the programs were better they would make a wider appeal. Much of the time devoted to religion over the air seems to be taken by extremists who represent only a fringe of the Christian Church. Even when the program

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is free from objection it is not always distinctly Christian. For instance, on Sunday morning as he journeys by automobile to preach, the writer often tunes in to enjoy "Wings over Jordan." The music by the ensemble of negro voices is sometimes worthy of praise, but the plaintive spirituals bear no relation to the speaking. At the end of the half hour no unseen hearer feels any quickening of the heart, any impulse to become a Christian, or any desire to engage in Christian service.

When will Protestants dare to attempt over the radio what Fulton J. Sheen and other eloquent preachers do every Sunday on behalf of the Roman church? They speak to win converts. This may be one reason why their church is growing. Some of the accessions are proselytes from Protestantism. They embrace Catholicism partly because they admire a church that proclaims what it believes. How long would an inquirer have to follow certain radio spokesmen for collective Protestantism before he discovered what we stand for? Would he ever learn how to become a Christian?

Judging by the radio, we Protestants do not stand. We wobble. But a better day has begun to dawn. More than a few Protestants who speak over the radio are not ashamed of Christ as Saviour and Lord. From New York City every week more than one message brings the hearer face to face with the Son of God. In practically every city at least one radio preacher is striving to win recruits. There need be no appeal on behalf of any denomination. But the Protestant church still has a message, and a right to be heard. In the Church of tomorrow there will be a large place for positive preaching over the radio.

Still closer to the heart of Christianity is *educational evan-*

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gelism. The home church should teach everyone of sufficient years how to become a Christian, and likewise nurture every convert as a potential builder of the Kingdom. There should be special concern about children and young people. Although the pastor may do little of the work himself, he should be the guiding spirit. In the pulpit and elsewhere he should strive to make the home church a nursery for tender souls and a training school for stalwart believers.

TRENDS IN CHRISTIAN NURTURE

These ideals come out of the New Testament, as well as the Old. In the United States their influence is due largely to Horace Bushnell. In 1847 he startled the religious world by his book *Christian Nurture*. From that time onward there has been a growing appreciation of the child as the chief human asset of the Church, and a desire to bring up every boy or girl as a citizen of the Kingdom.

According to Bushnell's famous dictum, "The child is to grow up a Christian, and never know himself as being otherwise." In that period when revivalism was highly esteemed, his teachings raised a storm of angry debate, which continued for years. However, strong thinkers and writers rallied to his support. Among them was Charles Hodge, staunchest of conservatives. Though on different grounds, doctrinally, this other theologian agreed with Bushnell that the child ought to grow up in the Church.

The pastor should make this truth clear to every parent of a growing child. Instead of arguing about the matter, or attempting to prove it by logic, the minister can teach the truth positively and kindly. One way is by illustration.

Clovis G. Chappell says that when he was a boy on the farm his father gave him a colt the day it was born. For

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the next few years he dealt with it so lovingly and skillfully that it never knew when it first began to do his bidding. It never needed to be broken. At the same time another colt was growing up without a master. It became as wild as though it had roamed the prairie. Before this young horse could be useful on the farm there had to be a painful process of breaking. Which is the Christian way of treating a colt or a child? Making or breaking? Nurture or neglect?

Educational evangelism should be dear to the hearts of pastor and people. Sometimes, however, education crowds out evangelism. In almost every congregation the church school is the most vital part of the whole body. Ideally, the school is the most effective agency for soul winning, as well as Christian nurture. The reason for stressing the matter here is to keep the record straight. Thank God for the church school!

There is need of other societies, especially for young people. But some of them keep increasing their efforts after they have forgotten their aims. As these organizations grow in numbers and complexity the man called of God to be a winner of souls and a shepherd of saints feels obliged to spend many waking hours tinkering with church machinery. As with the up-to-date farmer, the work of the minister has become mechanized. Many a parson ought to read the work of C. G. Jung, the Swiss psychiatrist, *Modern Man in Search of a Soul* (1933).

Partly because of a reaction against machine-like methods, there has recently been a gratifying emphasis on public worship. This is the highest form of Christian nurture. In a book that grew out of lectures to young mothers, *What You Owe Your Child* (1935), Dean Willard L. Sperry of the Harvard Divinity School insists that for any boy or

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girl the most vital privilege the church affords is the Sunday morning hour of worship. For the adult, also, public worship provides Christian nurture. On the mountaintop he can come face to face with Christ and be transformed.

There is also a large place for the sermon. Whenever a pulpit becomes vacant the officers begin looking for a minister who can preach. Often they search in vain. There are not half enough first-class preachers to supply the demand.

Many laymen wish to hear doctrinal sermons. They want to know the meaning and value of the Christian verities. These busy men feel the need of something solid to stand on as they face the problems of living today. This is one reason why Bernard Iddings Bell of the Protestant Episcopal Church prepared for *The Atlantic Monthly* (October, 1938) the article entitled "More Dogma, Please!" This trend towards doctrinal preaching is perhaps the most promising aspect of Protestantism today.

When we turn to Christian ethics we note a sharp cleavage, even among ministers who agree in theology. One who is evangelical stresses Biblical ethics far more than doctrine. Another who is orthodox looks on pulpit ethics as a kind of poison. He says, "Preach the simple Gospel!" As in other matters where good men differ, the path of wisdom lies between the two extremes. As in the times of the prophets and the apostles, there is need today of both doctrine and ethics. Usually they should come in this order. In preaching about man's duty there is need of the Biblical emphasis on both the individual and society.

In settling any such question it is needful to remember why one preaches. The aim is to glorify God. The way to do that is to meet the needs of men's hearts. The man in

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the pew needs to find God. Then there is the need of learning how to do His will in a sinful world. In this kind of pulpit work there is a constant blending of evangelism with nurture. Such has been the working philosophy of evangelical preachers from the days of Peter and Paul to those of Leslie D. Weatherhead and E. Stanley Jones.

There is likewise a recent tendency to exalt the "Ecumenical Church." At last we are learning to think of religion and life in terms of the whole world. Apart from the godly home, the Christian Church is our nearest approach to heaven. There is a growing determination to bring the various parts of the Church together in ties of love and service. While the ecumenical movement does not necessarily envision an all-inclusive Superchurch, the hope is that Christians who are like-minded will join forces, as among the three branches of the Methodist Church. Such union comes largely through Christian nurture. The advance agent of the Ecumenical Church is the local pastor.

Theoretically, the ecumenical movement is admirable. Practically, it often leaves the parish minister cold. The stress is on vast, costly conventions. They are in distant places, and they show little concern for the needs and problems of the pastor. It should be possible for the leaders to remember that in the work of the Kingdom the key man is the local minister. He in turn should have a horizon as broad as the human race.

How, then, shall the pastor keep his footing and lead his flock? After all sorts of experiments and compromises the most effective leaders have found that the way to conserve what the fathers have wrested from the world, and likewise move forward in conquest for Christ and His Kingdom, is for the local church to concentrate on its community, under

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the leadership of the pastor. Such a program is intensive rather than extensive, and continuous rather than spasmodic.

Parish evangelism is never stereotyped. There are no hard-and-fast formulae that the pastor must remember and the people must follow. However, there is more activity at some seasons than at others. The months leading up to Easter usually constitute the harvest season. At other times there is more emphasis on training God's people for Christian living and service.

There is nothing spectacular. Throughout the year various activities blend together in a harmony that calls no attention to itself. If any kind of Christian service went forward at the expense of some other, the body of the church would suffer. But when the right sort of evangelism prevails, everything good tends to prosper. From this point of view we are now to consider the meaning of parish evangelism.

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* The asterisk indicates a book in line with the preceding chapter. Some of the other volumes listed are equally worthy. But first-class works about evangelism are few.

CHAPTER II

PARISH EVANGELISM

THE ideal in parish evangelism is "a church which from pulpit to primary department is permeated by a desire to see a constant inflow of people who have come to know Christ as Saviour, and who in turn are seeking to lead others to the same experience." These are the words of Frederick E. Taylor, in a most suggestive book, *The Evangelistic Church* (1927). When he wrote the volume he had for twenty-one years been pastor of the large First Baptist Church of Indianapolis. But the same principles apply to small churches in villages and towns.

In parish evangelism many of the Baptists excel. For object lessons one can turn to other congregations, such as the Walnut Street Baptist Church in Louisville, Kentucky. Year after year, under Finley F. Gibson as minister, that congregation seems to have enjoyed a sort of continuous revival. The reason is that men and women, boys and girls, by the hundreds keep finding their way to the foot of the Cross. Such a church does not expend its energies in running machinery.

IDEALS IN PARISH EVANGELISM

Parish evangelism differs from current practice in two respects. One is simplicity. The plan calls for no new machinery or extra equipment, increase of staff or series of conferences. The emphasis is on the diligent use of "the

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outward and ordinary means of grace." The dependence is on God.

There is a place for mass movements once in a while. But as a rule the aftermath is disheartening. In the cities where the National Preaching Mission was most effective the resulting accessions to the churches were almost negligible. The chief contribution was in fostering the zeal of pastors and laymen for the work of the Kingdom, especially parish evangelism. Thus at the end these movements come back to New Testament ideals of simplicity.

Theoretically, a number of neighboring churches should unite for parish evangelism. They might avoid overlapping of effort and overlooking of persons. But a few years' experience in different parishes would convince anyone that each local church can win recruits best in a way distinctively its own. This is the contention of Canon Green in Manchester. It is also the judgment of the present writer. As a parish minister he entered heartily into every union movement that came along. He enjoyed the fellowship with other believers. But he decided that each congregation should work out from its own sanctuary.

Another difference is that parish evangelism starts with the home pastor. Most religious movements, however worthy, originate with distant leaders, and then work down to the local minister. Rightly or wrongly, he resents the word "down." He knows that the pastor of the home church, like the missionary at his foreign post, is the key man in the Kingdom today, and that it requires more ability to guide laymen in presenting the claims of Christ to neighbors and friends than for a seminary professor to evolve vast schemes for soul winning by other Christians. Like charity, evangelism begins at home.

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The plans wrought out in the classroom or skyscraper often soar over the heads of those who must do the work. The vast movement directed from afar seldom reaches the heart and conscience of the man who has lost the way to God. Of course the fault may lie partly with the home minister. He may not take the trouble to adapt the imported plans so as to meet the local situation. If he is wise, he will make changes in the direction of simplicity. Such is the meaning of homemade evangelism.

Throughout the history of the Church almost every soul-winning movement that has commended itself to later times has started in some local church. Opinions may differ regarding the Great Awakening which began in 1739 at Northampton, Massachusetts, under Jonathan Edwards. But there is no question concerning the revival in 1857-58. Among all the revival movements in America, this one most deserves careful study.

Unlike the recent years of depression, those "hard times" caused people to repent. In that time of panic hosts of people turned to God. Untold numbers united with the churches and continued faithful unto death. In almost every city ministers and laymen were quickened and strengthened for every sort of Christian service. The resulting revival helped prepare the nation for the shock of oncoming war. What a field for study in a day when the world seems to be facing chaos!

The movement started in New York City. The originator was a lay missionary, Jeremiah C. Lanphier. In 1857, under the Dutch Reformed Church, he went to labor in an obscure parish that had seen better days. He enlisted other laymen, first in meetings for prayer, and then in personal work, as well as the distribution of tracts. As the movement spread

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from church to church, and from city to city, ministers as well as laymen learned to use ordinary means as the channels for extraordinary achievements. There was no central office and no machinery. While there was a vast deal of newspaper publicity, it was unsought, and free. The dependence was on God.

The principle of starting with the people at home operates in fields not religious. Despite the tendency today to control everything from Washington, many of us wish that there were more room for initiative in each community. In the capital city of an agricultural state in the South a few years ago some of the leading social workers came to this conclusion. Among them were city ministers and teachers, with members of other professions, but practically no farmers. Such "leaders" rarely represent their rural constituency.

There was a conference to promote the "Live-at-Home Movement." The idea was that the farmer should raise enough vegetables and fruit, grain and livestock, as well as poultry, to feed his family. Then he could add to his capital most of the proceeds from the sale of cotton, which was the money crop. Theoretically, the plan was above reproach. Practically, anyone familiar with the farmer's mind could predict a stillbirth. That was what occurred. The first conference was the last.

At the closing session there was a banquet. It was in the ballroom of the most exclusive hotel in town, a place so costly that the dirt farmer seldom darkened its doors. Everyone present was arrayed in evening attire. After the royal repast the imported speaker delivered his address, which proved to be the swan song of the assembly. He pointed out that in the ballroom not an article of furniture or equipment had been manufactured in the state, and that on the table not

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a morsel of food had been raised in her borders. Because of that address the promoters turned the movement over to farmers. Under the new leaders in the various counties the cause began to prosper.

In a capital city farther north and west the ministers met at stated intervals to confer with experts who came from a distant city to promote evangelism. The pastors discovered that an expert is an earnest man who comes from a large city in a remote state, and that conferences consume time as well as money. While the clergymen were enjoying the midday meal at a hotel where most of them could not afford to entertain their wives, those women were at home doing the Monday washing. Of course the experts did not know this, for they never had been pastors. They never had tried to rear families on average ministerial salaries.

However, both husbands and wives would have been enthusiastic about the conferences if the projected plans had been workable. Finally one afternoon a certain pastor determined to fall back on what his father used to call "plain horse sense." Hour after hour the parson had been listening to the experts with their wide-sweeping theories. Occasionally he would ask a practical question, which brought forth still other vague ideas about organization. Facts were few, except in the way of diagnosis. At last he stole out and called on a Mrs. Stone.

From that one call, and others which came from it, the minister learned more about evangelism than he had gleaned from books and conferences. For weeks he had been planning to call on Mrs. Stone, but he had been too busy considering the theory of soul winning. After he had talked things over with her, and asked God's blessing on her home, the minister went on his way. He enlisted the help of a

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friendly woman who loved the Lord. Ere long Mrs. Stone accepted Christ and joined the church. With her came the husband, and in time they brought some of their neighbors.

Such simplicity is apostolic. The idea is to limit the field and then work it intensively. The field is the home community. Ideally, the working force includes the entire congregation. But many believers are not yet ready for active recruiting. Babies in the Lord must learn to walk before they can work. Hence the group of soul winners is likely to be small. It consists of spiritually minded men and women. These recruiting servants of the Lord are volunteers; they are never conscripted. There is no blare of trumpets, but still they keep on, because they love the King.

The leadership by the pastor is largely indirect. It is always inconspicuous. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit he daily discovers new opportunities to reach the unsaved and unchurched. He likewise learns to depend on his human helpers. Gradually he enters into the spirit of what the Living Christ said to the minister of the church at ancient Philadelphia: "I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it."

On the human level the most important worker by far is the pastor. But for a while we shall think chiefly about the laymen under his leadership. In these matters a useful guide-book is *Parish Administration* (1938), by Don Frank Fenn, an Episcopal rector of a large parish in Baltimore. His principles also apply to other denominations, and to small parishes, whether in the city or out in the country. After all, the Lord's work is much the same everywhere.

In that book the unit of thought is the parish church. If we think of it as a body, the members are the various societies. In another sense individual believers are members of the

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body of which Christ is the Head. But just now we are considering the vital functions of the different organizations. Their number and their names of course depend on many factors. But a few principles stand out everywhere.

Chief among the agencies of the parish church is the governing board. These officers may be known as deacons or elders, stewards or vestrymen. With few exceptions, these large-hearted laymen are the salt of the earth. Under the right sort of ministerial leadership they will do everything they can for Christ and His Church. They are responsible for the spiritual life and work of the congregation. Upon this group of men, under God, depends the effectiveness of parish evangelism.

The governing board should hold regular meetings. Except in midsummer, when there is a lull, the group should assemble formally at least once a month. There should be a docket. If any such meeting is to command the time and attention of strong, busy men, there should be a subject worthy of their thinking and prayers. For this purpose nothing could be better than parish evangelism. Any such program is more likely to enlist their hearty support if they have had the chief part in its making. To this subject the discussion should turn at every meeting, which should lead up to prayers for the saving of souls.

Except for the service that these officers render directly, as personal workers, their chief opportunity to promote evangelism is through the various societies, notably the church school. If possible the superintendent should be a member of the governing board. In any case he should be in accord with its program for parish evangelism. In selecting teachers to be approved by the governing board, and in helping train them for their work, he should think of the school as the

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chief evangelizing agency of the church. His own spirit of enthusiasm for soul winning should be contagious.

EVANGELISM IN THE CHURCH SCHOOL

The most effective soul winner in the congregation is likely to be a humble teacher in the church school. The methods of work vary according to the age of the pupils, but the controlling purpose of every teacher ought to be the same: "I am the lay pastor of this little flock. I must bring every one of them into right relations with God, and then help each of them prepare for lifelong service in the name of Christ." Such a teacher might take for a motto the words of the seer, as they are in the Hebrew: "They that are teachers shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever."¹

The gentle oversight by the church school continues through the years. Beginning with the cradle roll, ever keeping in touch with the home, the teachers and officers nurture the spiritual life of the boy or girl. At the age of ten or twelve there should be a personal acceptance of Christ as Saviour and King. If it were possible to win and train for the Kingdom every child born into a Christian home, the future of the Church would be secure. This is why Horace Bushnell stressed "the out-populating power of the Christian stock." God's little boys and girls should be the seed-corn for spreading the Kingdom throughout the earth.

The ministry of the church school should also be extensive. In the community at home, as in the mountains of Tennessee, or among the villages of the Punjab, the way to start evangelizing the world is to win the boys and girls—the younger the

¹ Daniel 12:3. See A.R.V. margin.

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better. In every normal community it is possible to open the doors of the church school to any little one not being nurtured by some other congregation. There should be almost as many children from without the fold as from within. They all belong to God. Through them it should be possible to reach the fathers and mothers, as well as the older sons and daughters. "A little child shall lead them."

Whatever the home background, the aim is to bring every boy or girl into right relations with God, through Jesus Christ. Even the child of the most godly parents needs to make a personal commitment. It was so with one of the best lads in the Bible. Although he was all that one could expect in a growing boy, "Samuel did not yet know the Lord, neither was the word of the Lord yet revealed unto him." But one night, through the leading of a man who loved the Lord, the boy came to know his mother's God. From that time onward through a life of rare achievement Samuel was consciously and gladly a child of the King.

The old-fashioned name for such a personal discovery of God is child conversion. It does not mean that the child is a scoundrel or a villain, but that he arrives at the hour when he puts himself into the hands of the Father God. Usually this experience comes in part through the gentle leading of an older person who for years has been a Christian. In the case of Helen Keller as a girl, the agent in revealing God was Phillips Brooks. When she learned about Him she wrote that she had known there was such a Person but that she had never known His name.

Child conversion comes in countless ways. It all seems to depend on the child's past experiences. In the Reformed Church of France the most distinguished family bears the name Monod. One of those clergymen was Wilfred. When

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he was ten years of age he told his mother one night that he had just given himself to the Lord Jesus. While her heart leaped up with joy she thought it wise not to dwell on the matter. She told her son that she was glad. Then she left him alone with his Lord. Years afterward the minister said, "I felt that night that I had laid the foundation that would last all my life."

Over in England William T. Stead was converted at the age of twelve. Years afterward, not long before that brilliant editor went down on the *Titanic*, he wrote:

It is forty-three years since that revival at school. The whole of my life during all these years has been influenced by the change which men call conversion. That was the conscious starting point of everything there has been of good or of service for my fellow men. My life has been flawed with failures and darkened with sins, but the thing that was good, that has enabled me to meet temptations and to bear burdens—that potent thing came into my life then, and abides with me to this day, my one incentive and inspiration in this life, and my only solid hope for that which is to come.

The principle of watching over the child as potentially a Christian and a member of the church lies close to the heart of religious education. When every officer or teacher in the church school acts as a recruiting agent, and watches over every boy or girl, whether from within or without the fold, there need be little concern about "the technique of child evangelism." When a wise, busy man dedicates to his Father God all the time and skill it requires to teach a class of restless boys, or when a godly woman of grace and charm mothers a group of little girls, the heart of the undershepherd will discover how to guide each lamb safely into the fold.

Among older boys and girls the difficulty is greater. Just when they most need the friendly shelter of home and church there may be a spirit of revolt and a turning away

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from God. Once again, the problem is that of lay leadership. With the right sort of teacher the boys will love both school and church. After a while they will also love the Lord. When the boys keep attending school and church, so do the girls. Here and there one finds a school where every class of boys older than seven or eight years has a strong man as teacher, and all the teachers of older boys and girls are as carefully selected and trained as in the "lower departments." This is where parish evangelism finds a fertile field.

THE MEN

Among the adult classes, also, the problem may be acute. If the men and the women meet regularly for Bible reading and discussion, with no outlet in Christian service, these groups may be no asset to school or church. If the men's class sets up in business for itself it may be almost a liability. Forgetting that the class belongs to the school, and that the school is part of the church, the class may use the premises and the prestige of the church to build up a competing organization. As Woodrow Wilson used to say about university athletics and other activities not wrong in themselves, the sideshows may overshadow the main tent.

If the minister attacked the problem directly he might cause bitterness and dissension. But through his lay advisers he can lead to the selection of a teacher and officers who will put the first thing first. Then the motto of the class may be: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." Among "all these things" that are by-products of our religion, far from least is social enjoyment among men who love the Lord. But the chief end of every adult class should be something loftier than human fellowship.

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Every class needs to have an outlet for pent-up energies. The most obvious way for a Christian man to serve God early on Sunday morning is to teach a group of boys in the church school. Why should the men's class not make a standing offer to provide the school with every male teacher that it needs? If any man feels that he would rather stay with the "fellows" and learn more himself, his reward will be all the greater if he makes the sacrifice. As for the learning, that comes twice as fast to the faithful teacher of boys as to the man who sits and absorbs what someone else has discovered about God in the Book.

Why should not the class also evangelize the men of the community? In almost every neighborhood more men are outside than within the church. By working to enlist these friends and neighbors the members of the class would gain a new incentive for reading the Bible, and a new joy in Christian fellowship. The way for the men's class to grow strong is to live for others, not for self; to give, not to get. Such men enjoy their religion, and keep growing. Others endure it, and are stunted.

Much the same principles apply to the men's brotherhood, which may pass under a different name. Unless it has a reason for existence as a going concern, the men's club may languish and die. If it survives, at a "slow, dying rate," it may not warrant the efforts required to keep it alive. In the work of the Lord every society within the church is either a help or a hindrance. Among the hindrances the leaders in more than one congregation include the men's club. On the other hand, the brotherhood ought to be to the home church what the right hand is to a man's body.

In the Presbyterian Church, U. S., commonly known as the Southern Church, the men of certain congregations are as

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well organized and aggressive as the women—and the women's work is second to none of its kind. In the Second Church of Charlotte, for example, "the Men of the Church" include the adult male members of the congregation, as well as others who care to belong. In such a church the visitor is impressed by the number and quality of the men. They are available for every form of Christian service. More than a few are eager to engage in evangelism.

Just before the outbreak of the second World War Emil Brunner, the Swiss theologian, spent a year in the States. For a number of weeks he visited churches in the South. When he was about to start homeward to Europe he remarked that the most amazing thing he had seen in our land was the number of strong men on whom certain pastors in the South can rely for Christian service. Here and there in the Middle West, out on the Coast, or here in the East, this friendly observer might have found similar brotherhoods, but not many in all.

As a rule in the parish today there is a lack of man power. In the days of her glory, which have been days of revival, the Church of Christ has appealed to strong men, as well as noble women. Christ Himself was the Ideal Man. Today He is looking to the home church for men whom He can use in building up the Kingdom. What does He often find? A church body that is suffering from pernicious anemia, if not creeping paralysis! One reason is that the men have not been "abounding in the work of the Lord."

THE WOMEN

It is easier to enlist women for parish evangelism. As in the group by the river at Philippi, any Bible class or missionary society composed of godly women includes some who

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have time and ability to win their friends and neighbors, one by one. What they are waiting for, as on that river bank, is some minister who will lead them to a larger vision of God in Christ. With Lydia as Paul's recruiting agent among the women of Philippi, and the converted jailer to deal with the men, is it any wonder that the congregation became the one that the Apostle loved the most?

In three successive parishes the writer found women who were eager to engage in soul winning. Amid all their activities for the home church they felt that something was lacking. As for the serving of tables, they took their share of that, but largely from a sense of duty. Especially those who did their own housework felt that they had drudgery enough at home. But they longed to share with the pastor the joys of winning souls and nurturing them in the Lord.

The part of the minister was simple. He kept his eyes open until he figured out which group of women included the most likely workers. In one field they belonged to the women's missionary society; in each of the other churches, one of the women's Bible classes. Whatever the group, he dealt with some of the members personally. There was no announcement of plans, and no report to the group. Practically all it did was to provide the workers, and keep them filled with zeal for the Kingdom.

With each worker the procedure was much the same. The pastor invited her to become a volunteer caller in her part of the community. Sometimes he would furnish names and addresses, with a few facts about each person on whom she was to call. But as a rule she found the openings herself, and then reported to the minister anything that he ought to know. She kept her eyes open for the moving van. The same afternoon she would send one of the children across

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with a pie warm from the oven. Before Sunday she would call and invite the friends to come with her and her husband to church, as well as Bible school.

Neighborhood calling may be social rather than evangelistic. Even so, Christian kindness on the part of a woman with tact and charm unlocks many a heart. When the mother across the way is pining for friends whom she will seldom see any more, a cheery call by a winsome neighbor is a boon from heaven. Such kindness leaves a wholesome impression about the strange church round the corner. The advance agent prepares the way for the minister and others to render whatever service the home may need.

However, the Christian worker soon gains courage to call directly in the name of Christ. In any residential district she can find women who are lonely. She can win them for the Master through her kindness. In any such case a volunteer worker is more effective than a paid member of the staff. In a large church at St. Louis the pastor complains because the women think the deaconesses ought to do such calling. Most of the Lord's work is in churches that have no staff. They find difficulty in paying the pastor's salary. But he can enlist a dozen or a score of volunteer callers.

The theory is simple. But in practice there are snags. Some of the friendly visitors are young and all of them charming. At times their zeal runs away with their judgment. When a caller finds that a certain new family belongs of right to another congregation she is supposed to notify the pastor concerned and do all she can to guide the family into the church home where they should go. But in this respect the plan does not work ideally. Unless the minister is careful he will become known as a stealer of sheep.

Another difficulty is more acute. Among women there

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are social distinctions and barriers. Before the newcomer down the street can be sure of having friends, she and her children must pass inspection. Here again the tactful caller is able to win her way. A number of these women scattered through the parish can do much to change antisocial conditions. They can not only win souls for Christ; they can help Christian women learn how to live together in the neighborhood as sisters of the King.

Only the Lord and the minister can tell how much a woman of this kind means to the church and the community. According to the son-in-law and biographer of George W. Truett, when a well-known Baptist divine was holding special services in a rural community of Texas he found one day that among the Christians present more than twenty looked up to Mother Truett as the friend who had brought them to the Saviour. Needless to tell, she loved them as her children in the Lord. Is it any wonder that her son is known everywhere as a pastoral evangelist? Think of his mother!

How does a good woman lead a friend to Christ? Who can tell? Without knowing more of the facts than the biographer reveals, one dares to surmise that Mother Truett had never heard about "the technique of soul winning," that she had never attended a conference on the subject, and that she had never read a book about evangelism, except the Bible. She must simply have loved the Lord Jesus so much that she wished everyone else to love Him and find a home in His church. This is what the fathers and mothers used to call a "concern for souls."

Such is the ideal. What are the facts? In country and city alike many a parish resembles an abandoned farm, where the buildings are in need of repair and the springs run dry in summer, just when they are needed most. However, people

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who love the soil and are willing to work can reclaim an abandoned farm. So can those who love the Lord and are willing to do personal work gradually restore the church that seems to be hopeless.

The transforming influence may flow from a single home. There the power is likely to be in the heart of a humble woman. In eastern Ohio one of the rural churches is not likely to be abandoned. An active worker is a woman of middle age. She and her husband were born in one of the Balkan states of Europe. On a Sunday evening she was entertaining the seminary professor who had just delivered the sermon at the installation of the pastor-elect. The professor had been preaching from the seer's vision of the valley full of dead men's bones, very many and very dry, in Ezekiel 37:1-10.

"Thank you," she said, "for telling us about the miracle of the Gospel. Christ can change the worst community on earth. He must want to save Europe and Asia. But I wish you had told about what He can do for us dairy farmers here in Ohio. For years I have been telling my neighbors and friends about Jesus and the church. They need the church and the church needs them. This afternoon I took some of them with me to church. I was hoping you would tell them how to be saved and why they should join the church. But you were too busy talking about things far away and long ago."

The minister thanked her for such unusual kindness. He said he was sorry to have missed the mark, and he promised never to do so again. At last he had learned a part of what an installation service is for. It is to introduce the new pastor as a winner of souls. On the morrow as the professor journeyed homeward he wondered why such occasions are some-

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times dull and profitless. He decided that the men who go out to render such service ought to study pastoral theology for a while under his friend out on that farm.

Over in western Pennsylvania is a rural church with a different "problem." According to Charles R. Zahniser, many of the "good people" have moved away from the mining community. But those who remain have won the hearts of their new neighbors. Among these people of foreign birth the key to the heart is Christian kindness. First through the children, then through the women, and at last through the men, the local church has built up the Kingdom of God in that mining district. Why should there not be such a soul-winning and life-building church in every community?

THE YOUNG PEOPLE

What of the young people? In our zeal for mature men and women, as well as boys and girls, we must not overlook the young folk. Neither should we think of them as a "problem." Especially among the sons and daughters of Christian homes the so-called problem is an opportunity. But if we are to make the most of it we must quit saying or thinking, "How can we hold our dear young people?"

Don't try to hold them! Let them go! They are not babes in arms! Treat them as people. Act as though every young man were a man. Regard every young woman as a woman. Even if they have not yet "put away childish things," do as the Lord Jesus did with inconsistent Peter. Love them. Believe in them. Expect great things from them. Attempt great things with them. Treat them as partners in home and church.

Christian young folk need the kind of religion that appeals to their strength, not their weakness. Some of them care

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little about meeting together on Sunday evening for the sake of meeting. They find it hard to express well what they have not experienced at all. The best of them are grateful for the young people's society, but often they feel that something is lacking. One thing, as a rule, is a sufficient outlet for youthful energies. If so, why not enlist them for evangelism among people of their own age? Of course a young man should work with a young man, and a young woman with a young woman. The idea is not for the church to conduct a matrimonial bureau.

Our young folk need exercise for their souls. The church school affords them spiritual food. Morning worship brings them to the mountaintop where God seems real. Their own meeting provides an opportunity to express their faith. Ideally, all of this is admirable. Actually, it may become self-centered. It is never wholesome to divorce faith and speech from life and deeds. If we wish to do away with the resulting feeling of futility we should give them tasks worthy of their youthful powers. That was the way our Lord acted with young Peter, who was to become a power as a winner of souls. What chance would young Peter have in your church today?

A large congregation has still other societies. Each of them exists to meet a vital need in the community. For example, in three successive congregations a certain minister's wife found that no one in the church was paying special attention to business women and girls. She gathered them into a Bible class, and led them in various forms of Christian service. In one field the class took over from the Associated Charities the support of an indigent family. But the main expressional activity was in the way of personal work.

Each class met a real need in the lives of the members. In

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the first group they were girls. In the second the appeal was rather to women, some of whom were young. In the third the range of years was wider. But they all liked to be addressed as "girls." They loved to think that somebody cared for them and believed in them as daughters of the King. A number had been thwarted in love. Others were the innocent victims of divorce. A few were finding it hard to preserve "the white flower of a blameless life." Each heart knew its own bitterness. In short, they needed Christian friendship and leadership.

Ere long each group became an integral part of the home church. At times during the week there would be social gatherings of the class, with all sorts of jolly good fun. But the chief aim was spiritual. As one by one they found peace in their hearts they began telling other business women and girls about the class and likewise about the Saviour.

In every city residential district women and girls who earn their living afford a rare opportunity for individual evangelism. The best person to approach them, as a rule, is one of their number whom they respect. For instance, according to Don Frank Fenn, in Baltimore a registered nurse has belonged to the Daughters of the King forty-nine years. During that time she has brought to Confirmation forty-nine people. What clergyman would not thank God daily for such a woman to labor with him in the Gospel?

Thus we might go on. But the basic idea should now be clear. As for the practical workings, they vary according to the field. On paper the program may seem complicated. But under wise leadership the plan is simple. It calls for Christian workers who employ existing channels in presenting the claims of the Lord to their neighbors and friends, one after another, persuasively. According to Bishop Edwin H.

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Hughes, evangelism means "the effort to bring men to faith in Christ and to a surrender to Him."

There has been little thus far about the most important person; that is, on the human level. From this time on we shall look up to the minister as the leader in parish evangelism. Under God, the effectiveness of any such movement depends chiefly upon this one man. Especially in view of present-day needs and problems, the call in every congregation is for the pastoral evangelist. Wherefore, O man of God, gird up thy loins! "Thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this!"

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CHAPTER III

PASTORAL LEADERSHIP

PASTORAL leadership in soul winning depends on various factors, human and divine. On the human level the chief element is a controlling purpose. Ere the most promising young minister finds himself he may flounder. According to William James, before a man learns how to live with a steadfast purpose "existence is little more than a series of zigzags, as now one tendency and now another gets the upper hand." A pastor's ineffectiveness may be due to no lack of ability and charm but to the absence of a controlling purpose.

"Now that you have been ordained and installed," said a college president to the brilliant son who had followed his father into the ministry, "what is your chief aim in life? Do you wish to become a preacher or a pastor, a religious educator or a personal counselor, a parish administrator or a board secretary? You may even aspire to be a college president or a seminary professor!"

After he had thought for a little while the son answered: "I hope to become a pastoral evangelist. The Church needs an occasional expert in each of those special fields, but the average congregation ought to have a pastoral evangelist. I wish to be the shepherd of everyone in the parish. I plan to care for the flock as a whole. I should willingly die to shield them from harm. Above all, my heart goes out to the person who is lost."

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IDEALS IN PASTORAL LEADERSHIP

The ideals in pastoral evangelism come from the New Testament. For instance, take Paul's farewell to the leaders of the church at Ephesus in Acts 20:17-38. In that city he had labored at one time for two years and three months. In terms of today he was scarcely a pastor, and those elders may not have been clergymen. Nevertheless, Paul's words show the spirit and meaning of pastoral evangelism. With John Wesley, that other founder of churches, the Apostle might have exclaimed, "The world is my parish!" With all his ecumenical mind neither man forgot the needs of the local community or of the lone sinner for whom the Saviour died.

The difficulty is to maintain one's balance. If the minister is of the impulsive type he may concern himself with the winning of souls and neglect the other duties of the pastorate. If the neighboring parson is of the reflective temperament he may confine himself to the care of the sheep and refuse to engage in anything evangelistic. Fortunately, however, the history of the Church abounds with examples of ministers who have excelled in both respects. They have blended evangelistic fervor with pastoral fidelity, much as the sun sends forth both heat and light.

For living examples of well-rounded ministries read *The Country Parson* (1652), by George Herbert, the English poet, and the life of Jean Frédéric Oberlin, a German-French rural pastor in Alsace-Lorraine. For a recent example turn to *Highland Shepherds* (1939), by Arthur W. Hewitt. Each of these men has differed widely from the others. But all have been alike in love for the Lord and for people. The same principles apply in the remotest rural parish, under the

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minister whose name may not be known in the adjoining county. But his praises are sounding in heaven.

The city congregation, also, needs a pastoral evangelist. For an object lesson turn to Burris A. Jenkins of Kansas City, or to George W. Truett of Dallas. If one refers to him often it is because he comes close to the ideals in view. Whatever the size of the church, the pastoral evangelist is the minister with the shepherd heart. His life and work afford a living commentary on the spirit and meaning of apostolic evangelism as it shines forth in the experience of Paul. Just as the Apostle's letters show the minister how to watch over the flock, so does the latter part of Acts embody almost every principle of parish evangelism today. Five call for special notice.

First, the Apostle labored where he felt most at home. For him that meant the city. Many another man, like John the Baptist, prefers to be out in the open spaces. But the minister who resembles the Apostle Paul or Phillips Brooks is most effective in such a center as Philippi or Boston. Like Moody and Sankey, Paul and his associates went from one city to another. His strategy is worthy of study today. The plan was to start work in a city and then branch out so as to Christianize the surrounding territory. This is the procedure of the missionary statesman now, such as J. Wascom Pickett, Bishop of the Methodist Church in Bombay. To this kind of apostolic strategy we in the States should return.

Ideally, such a program calls for an active church in every community. As Bishop Pickett says, "The establishing of an indigenous church is incomparably the most valuable result of foreign missionary efforts in evangelism." The same principle applies here at home. Wherever the local forces are not strong enough to hold the work together, and likewise

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reach out into the community, there should be help from the Church at large. "We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak." What could be weaker than some of our country churches?

The importance of the rural minister was clear to the leaders of the early Church. The most eloquent of them was Chrysostom. In the nineteenth of his famous homilies on the statues he praises the country preachers who have come into Antioch for a red-letter day:

By their presence these brethren from the country beautify the city, and adorn the church. Their life is laborious. At one time they yoke the oxen, guide the plow, and cut the furrow deep. At another they ascend the pulpit, and cut away thorns from the soul with a billhook. Their understanding is full of spiritual wisdom, and their mode of life is a transcript of their doctrines.

There was a time when rural congregations served as fountainheads from which the metropolitan church kept receiving new members to replace those who passed away. In certain parts of the land the streams may still be flowing toward the city, but elsewhere they are drying up. The time has come when the city church must depend mainly upon local people to recruit the ranks. Likewise should there be constant help for village and country churches that are struggling.

Who is able to help the rural church? In most of our cities the Protestant forces seem to be barely holding their own. In the downtown districts some are not even doing that. In city after city the Protestant church has practically given up the struggle to maintain itself downtown and has followed "the good people" out into the suburbs. Especially if the downtown district is residential, it needs the Gospel desperately. Where sin abounds, grace should much more abound.

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In one of the "poorer districts" of downtown Pittsburgh a few years ago a congregation invited a young minister to become the pastor. The parish lay along the Ohio River, in a community that had long been residential. But when factories began to come in, people who could afford to do so moved out to the hills. Finally the pastor lost heart and resigned. Some of the lay officers were tempted to give up the struggle. They said that their pastor had been an able man, and that if he could not make the work go forward the church might as well close its doors.

But wiser counsels prevailed. Some of the people who lived near the church loved to worship there. Others who had gone out to the suburbs retained their membership where they had first found the Lord. The congregation as a whole kept praying for the coming of a pastoral evangelist. In view of these facts an elderly minister in an adjoining parish said to the young man who was considering the call: "There are more unchurched people in that part of town than ever before. If the Protestant church cannot live and thrive in such a district our cause is doomed." The young minister welcomed these words as from God. When he became the pastor he found the work difficult. At times it was disheartening. But ere long he decided that in all of Greater Pittsburgh there was no more fertile field for pastoral evangelism. In like manner, every district where people dwell today cries out for the Living God.

Again, the example of Paul shows that in evangelizing the community everything should center round the local church. When the Apostle began to labor in Corinth or Thessalonica he found his way at once to the synagogue. As soon as he could do so he organized a Christian church. Then he arranged to leave the work in charge of a pastor, as well as a

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group of lay officers. How the Apostle ever could enlist and train leaders enough for churches in city after city is a mystery. But that is what we expect from a spiritual genius like Paul. From him we should learn the strategic importance of the church as the center of neighborhood evangelism.

If a minister is to be used in building up a congregation he must have the shepherd heart. While the work does not require the powers of a genius or a giant, it does take all of a man's time and strength. In the home church he must live and move and have his being. According to an Episcopal rector who became a bishop, "Parish work is exacting. It demands all that is in one, and oftentimes more. For a while I tried to help run the city and state. I learned that if I did not lead the Chamber of Commerce or the state-wide movement for something or other, capable leaders would emerge, but that if I neglected my parish no one else could do my work for Christ."

Once more, the Apostle relied largely on preaching. When he addressed people familiar with the Bible his sermon was a saturated solution of the Scriptures. But when he spoke to persons with no such background he sought another pathway into their hearts. Whatever the approach, his custom was to proclaim the Living Christ as God's way of redeeming men. While the form of Paul's preaching would not be suitable in our time, the substance of his message as reported in Acts is of vital concern to everyone who would deliver soul-winning sermons.

Apart from its Christian content the chief fact about the preaching of Paul was its spirit. For want of a better term we may speak of it as enthusiasm. Literally, the word means that God is in a man, possessing him, body and soul. Al-

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though the Apostle was a mighty thinker, as we learn from his epistles, his sermons moved largely in the realm of Christian experience. Even when he was in danger of being put to death his chief desire was the conversion of his hearer. So intense was the zeal of the Apostle that one of his royal judges exclaimed: "Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad."

Amid all the heat of his desire to win recruits the Apostle never ceased to be a Christian gentleman. When King Agrippa said to the impassioned preacher, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian," the words may not have been sincere. But Paul's reply was above reproach: "I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds." In the working philosophy of such a preacher the cause of Christ is first; the welfare of the hearer is second; the interests of the speaker are last. This is ministerial evangelism.

Still further, the Apostle attached untold importance to personal work. In his farewell to those brethren he spoke about having gone "from house to house." He must often have entered Christian homes to explain the will of the Lord. The Apostle must likewise have spent much time in seeking out persons yet to be won for Christ. By means of what we know as adult conversions, leading to baptism, Paul built up church after church. Among those elders from Ephesus probably every one had accepted the Saviour because of this indefatigable winner of souls. Is it any wonder that busy men journeyed forty miles to be with him a few hours, and that they wept on his neck when they bade him farewell?

Lastly, Paul made large use of lay workers as well as min-

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isters. Wherever he labored he gathered about him a group of laymen whom he had led to Christ. Lovingly the Apostle trained them for posts of leadership in the home church. Like Wesley or Moody, John R. Mott or any other statesman in the Kingdom of God, Paul must have known what is in man. The Apostle was able to select the right person for each post. In the practical affairs of the congregation such wisdom in choosing men is a priceless asset. The secret is largely in loving them, one by one, and in trusting each of them to use his powers for the glory of God. As Moody used to insist, it is better to inspire ten workers for Christ than to do the work of all ten.

In apostolic times there was no gulf between clergy and laity. For instance, were those elders from Ephesus ministers or not? Who can tell? One or two may have been set apart to teach, whereas the rest would now be termed lay officers. In modern phrase, think of them as the minister and stewards of the central church in Ephesus. Whatever their titles, they all stood on the same level. They were followers of Christ and friends of Paul. They loved him because he first loved them. Their loyalty shows that it is better to have a loving hold on the hearts of laymen than to teach them methodology. Leadership is personal.

We have now considered five aspects of apostolic evangelism. In other respects none of us can be like Paul. He was a genius, and he lived on a lofty plane. But in these five ways every man called of God to be a parish minister can follow in the footsteps of the greatest Christian who ever lived. In order to start doing so one should commit to memory this entire passage, especially the following part: "I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood

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of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God."

There is an impression that only the man of unique gifts and graces can become a pastoral evangelist. For such a misconception we who teach and write are much to blame. We get our materials from sources that are accessible. We find our facts in books that are available to our students and readers. We take as our examples Paul and Wesley, Merton S. Rice and Bernard C. Clausen, rather than the unknown pastor. But in the eyes of God perhaps the last shall be first.

As a rule the writer of books about religion has had experience only in a large city church. In preparing his manuscript he makes use of what other men have written on the basis of similar experiences. Some of these days, however, we shall discover that the vast majority of our congregations are small, and that it may require more ability to lead a little flock than if the working force were twice as large.

Anyone who has visited Stoke Poges in rural England and there pondered over Thomas Gray's "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" will recall his haunting lines. These four might refer to rural pastors, as well as their people:

Let not Ambition mock their useful toil,
Their homely joys, and destiny obscure;
Nor Grandeur hear with a disdainful smile
The short and simple annals of the poor.

MARKS OF THE PASTORAL EVANGELIST

What qualities ought to appear in every pastoral evangelist? Each man should be himself, and not a copy of some celebrity. But there are five respects in which all pastoral evangelists are alike, whether they be famous or obscure.

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The first mark, and the most vital, is a personal experience of redeeming grace. It need not be spectacular, but it must be real. Without some sort of inner light, rekindled from day to day, how can the most eloquent preacher and tireless worker guide others along a road which he has never traveled? However, there is hope for a change of heart in any young minister to whom religion thus far has been only a matter of secondhand information.

The classic example of a transforming experience is that of young Isaiah as he tells it in the sixth chapter of his prophecy. No one else can behold the same kind of vision. But everyone who preaches the gospel should have come face to face with the Living God, and have felt a sense of sinfulness, both in self and in others. Then there should be an experience of redeeming grace, with assurance of pardon and cleansing, as well as peace and strength to serve. "Here am I; send me!" If a minister is able to bring these experiences up to date, morning after morning, he can qualify as a pastoral evangelist.

Another mark of the soul-winning pastor is love for people, individually. On the human level this is probably the chief trait of the pastoral evangelist. For instance, look at Simon Peter. As a leader of the Apostolic Church he stands side by side with Saint Paul. As a popular evangelistic preacher the former seems to have been the more effective. While not such a genius as Paul, this other Apostle too was a power in building up the Kingdom. Much of this magnetism may have been due, under God, to Peter's love for human beings, one at a time. This is what Horace Bushnell termed "the individualizing power."

Once again, the pastoral evangelist ought to have intellectual ability of a high order. While he need not be a

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brilliant thinker, or a technical scholar, the leader of the home church needs to plan his work and carry it forward. He needs to enlist others and guide them as volunteer workers. Such ability to solve parish problems as they arise, and meet spiritual needs with limited resources, is as exacting a test of a man's gray matter as he ever meets in academic halls. The leader of the parish church should have as much mental acumen as the teacher of students for the ministry.

The reputation of the "evangelist" is almost the reverse. The term has become associated with pulpit ranting, in the form of emotional ebullitions. If this were all that the work required, dumb Snug in Shakespeare's play, *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, could fill the rôle. When he protests, "I am slow of study," his brother buffoon replies, "You can do it extempore, for it is nothing but roaring." Alas, sometimes it is so! But evangelism worthy of the name calls for loving God with all of one's mind.

In order to prepare an evangelistic sermon one must have brains, as well as heart. When a young minister reported that he had preached a soul-winning message once a month, his former professor asked him why there had not been one a week. This was the reply: "It takes me a month to prepare an evangelistic sermon!" If any man is to preach soul-winning messages Sunday after Sunday throughout the months before Easter, and likewise nurture the sheep that are safe in the fold, he must have brains and keep them busy.

The calling of the pastoral evangelist, however, includes far more than preaching. The other parts of the work also require intellectual ability. For example, take Richard Baxter at Kidderminster, England, or Thomas Chalmers at the Tron Church in Glasgow. A study of either man's biography will show that in his pastoral labors he mixed piety

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with the sort of brains that would have brought fortune and fame in many another calling. When will the Church of Christ learn to appreciate the caliber of her parish ministers?

More vital than mental power is that elusive quality known as personality. Every minister at whom we have glanced has been notable in this respect, and each in a fashion all his own. Another man of massive mold was Alexander Whyte, at Free Saint George's Church in Edinburgh. Every young minister who served with Whyte went out to become an effective pastor and preacher. Among those younger ministers no two were alike. Whyte insisted that each one keep on being his own best self. Beneath all these individual differences, however, lies the broad fact of personality.

The modern way of describing personality is pragmatic: it is "the ability to influence people." Personality is a mystery. Who can tell why a certain minister attracts where another does not? When one inquires how the spell works, there is no answer. For instance, when George W. Truett was twenty-three years of age, and not highly educated, his chief qualification for an important post was personality. The older minister who recommended the young man put the idea in simple terms: "Wherever he speaks the people do what he asks them to do."

A fifth mark of the pastoral evangelist is equally hard to define. One psychologist labels it "drive." But that is not the word to describe a shepherd. He loves to lead. He would not drive if he could, and he could not if he would. For want of a better term let us adopt the word "leadership." Whatever the label, the reference is to one who has a sense of purpose and direction, as well as ability to keep moving forward, but never too fast for the sheep. Without worry or hurry or fear the good shepherd brings his flock

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safely into the fold before the storms of winter. In all his work there is a blending of idealism and realism, courage and perseverance, faith in God and love for the sheep.

For an object lesson of human leadership turn to the record about the storm on the Mediterranean in Acts 27. Nowhere in the Scriptures is there a more vivid example of how God uses a man in saving others. In Paul's leadership there is a blending of idealism and common sense, courage and prudence, initiative and determination. Would that every congregation with 276 members had such a leader, especially in the time of storm.

In the spirit of apostolic optimism many an inconspicuous pastor excels. In North Carolina such a man of God was pastor of a rural church with about as many members as there were voyagers on that ship with Paul. All one summer the pastor lay abed convalescing from a critical illness. Partly because the congregation could not afford to pay for supplies, in addition to his salary, there had been practically no preaching during his absence from the pulpit. But when he was able to resume his work he saw that throughout the parish there had been a revival of old-fashioned religion.

What was the explanation? Intercessory prayer! Morning after morning, while still unable to read or see his friends, he started praying round the parish. He talked with God about every man or woman, boy or girl, white or colored, within five or six miles. In each case the thanksgivings and petitions depended on whether or not the friend was a Christian. To make these pastoral rounds by way of the mercy seat required all of the minister's waking hours, especially since he had to rest in sleep every little while. Later he discovered that the people had been praying for him. Some who had never done so before learned to pray

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so as to intercede for their friend. When people and pastor pray for each other the field is ready for a harvest.

We have now glanced at five marks of the pastoral evangelist. He has a vital experience of redeeming grace, an experience constantly renewed. He is a lover of human beings, one by one. He has intellectual ability, so as to see what ought to be done, and then guide others in the doing. He has the rare quality known as personality, so that his plans are not made by machine. He has the gift of leadership, because he knows whither he is going, and how to find the way. He keeps moving forward in the assurance that with the people of God the best is always yet to be. He is a Christian optimist.

All these ideals lead one to exclaim with the Apostle, "Who is sufficient for these things?" Let the answer be from the same leader of men and builder of churches: "Our sufficiency is of God." Both sayings are from Second Corinthians, the spiritual autobiography of the greatest Christian preacher.

DIFFICULTIES IN PASTORAL LEADERSHIP

If we are to be fair we ought to consider the obstacles. Never has the task of the pastoral evangelist been so disheartening as today. Some of the difficulties may be peculiar to the parish. Still more are due to the state of the times. But we shall think only about the adverse factors that concern the minister himself. Most of the conditions that hold a man back from evangelistic leadership are subjective. They are so many that he may feel like Lazarus when he came forth from the tomb bound hand and foot. What then are these inhibitions that deter a minister from being a pastoral evangelist?

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The first is the most serious. It is lack of a present, vital experience. Wholly apart from the false prophet, who ought never to have been ordained, the love in any minister's heart is likely to grow cold. This is why one tends to be less evangelistic as one gets older. When the soul grows cold one begins to preach about the Jesus of history, not the Christ of experience. One prefers to speak of saving grace in past tenses. One may even label certain sermons "post-mortem"! This mood finds expression in some of the older hymns. For instance, here are the first and second stanzas of one by William Cowper:

Where is the blessedness I knew
When first I saw the Lord?
Where is the soul-refreshing view
Of Jesus and His word?

What peaceful hours I once enjoyed!
How sweet their memory still!
But they have left an aching void
The world can never fill.

A kindred difficulty is professionalism. During the first few years in the sacred work one forms a number of habits, all of which may be worthy. But soon religion may become a matter of routine. The home church may seem to be a machine which one can manipulate. By pulling wires and by playing golf with others who are adept in such arts one can "rise in the Church." Money begins to loom large. So does a place in the sun.

When a certain minister devoted himself to churches with throngs of students, but scarcity of money, a classmate inquired: "Why bother with college boys and girls? They fill up the pews but can't help with the bills!" With all thy getting get money! Where professionalism reigns spiritu-

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ality wanes. A heavenly calling becomes an earthly job.

Another difficulty, much more subjective, is a feeling of unfitness. A man of the introvert type may insist that he lacks the gifts and graces needful for evangelism. If so, he is equally ill-equipped for Christian nurture. A feeling of unfitness held the writer back from the ministry for three years after he had finished college. But when he became a pastor he enjoyed all sorts of Christian work. The Lord is able to use in soul winning and nurture every man whom He calls. Leave the responsibility with Him!

A less formidable obstacle may be lack of training. The fault may lie with the seminary. In fact, the divinity school bids fair to become the scapegoat of the modern Church. Unless the school of the prophets is situated near the heart of a city, or in some other district with facilities for case-work evangelism, how can the divinity school prepare the student adequately? Then, too, such training calls for both time and money. Apart from the regular curriculum, the practical internship should extend over two full years, under expert supervision. But with finances as they are how can the seminary in three crowded years give a professional training comparable with that of the six years in a medical school and the affiliated hospitals?

This much the divinity school can do in evangelism. The instructors can lead the student into the field; introduce him to the literature, beginning with the Bible; inspire him to read church history, with emphasis on the winning of souls, and help him set up lofty ideals for his work as a pastoral evangelist.

But the professional training will have to come mainly after he enters the active ministry. There he will learn how to use God-given powers in meeting human needs. Such

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a professional equipment is like that of the young man who goes out to Nebraska from the Harvard Law School. He has a firm grounding in the principles of jurisprudence, but he must learn how to apply them in his local community.

The last of these difficulties is one of the most serious. It is loss of faith. Owing to "the acids of modernity," the college or university graduate who spends three years in a divinity school may not be sure about the personality of God, the Lordship of Christ, or the reality of the Holy Spirit. How can such a man appraise the value of the human soul, sense the deadliness of sin, or speak about the certainty of judgment? How can he keep from questioning the need of the new birth, the fact of conversion, and the promise of life everlasting? What has he to preach? How can he lead others in prayer?

An object lesson will show how uncertainty keeps the servant of God from responding to the call of the Most High. Think of Moses at the burning bush, as narrated in Exodus 3:1-4:17. Even after that encounter with the Living God there was not a sufficient desire to serve. The five excuses of Moses sound strangely modern. They might serve as the starting points for a series of lectures at a summer school for pastors. Usually they hear little about evangelism except its difficulties today. But when was it ever easy?

In each of the five passages, however, the emphasis is not on man's excuse, but on God's response. In the words that appear below, look at the personal pronouns. The phrasing of the last excuse and response has been altered slightly.

1. Who am I?—Certainly I will be with thee.
2. What shall I say?—I AM THAT I AM. (Tell about God!)
3. They will not believe me!—What is that in thine hand?

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4. I am not eloquent!—I will be with thy mouth.
5. Send someone else!—Is not Aaron thy brother?

Each excuse stresses the human; each reply exalts the divine. Let us translate these replies into the speech of today. (1) God is here with you—3:12a. Back of you as His personal representative is all the power of the Most High. (2) Preach about the Lord—3:14. This phrase I AM is one of the most mysterious titles of the Eternal. (3) Hold in your hand the Bible—4:2. Use it as the symbol of God's almighty power. (4) The Lord will guide you in knowing what to preach—4:11. He is the Fountainhead of all wisdom and grace. (5) Choose as your chief associate a man who knows God and loves people—4:14. When you are weak he will be strong.

There is no excuse for failure to do the will of God. When He calls a man to become the leader of the home church, the Lord makes it possible for him to surmount every obstacle, within and without. What many a man needs just now is the courage to start. "Faith means courage to begin and keep on doing the will of the Lord, making the most of what you have, and trusting God to back up your best with His almighty power." As the days go by, the weak heart and the flabby muscles will become strong. At the end of the pilgrimage, like Moses, you will be able to look back over "forty years of mercy."

For a living example of how to rise above feelings of personal inadequacy, look at J. Wilbur Chapman. When he was young he was invited to become pastor of Bethany Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia. This large congregation was in one of the "poorer districts." Feeling that he was not properly equipped, he decided to visit Spurgeon's

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Tabernacle in London and discover the secret of that man's power among the lower middle classes. After a few weeks the young minister returned home and took up his new work. Ere long the congregation in Philadelphia became known because of the many converts and the spirit of constant revival.

The pastor gave the credit largely to Spurgeon. He in turn would have ascribed the glory to God. In fact, the young man did too. At the close of a wondrous day in the Tabernacle he had tried to thank Spurgeon but the older man replied: "Tut, tut, my brother, the blessing is from above. Every day and night thousands of people in London and scores of thousands everywhere in the English-speaking world are praying for the Tabernacle and for me as the pastor. If you wish to have a soul-winning church get your people to pray."

The young minister followed this counsel. At the beginning of his work he told his people what Spurgeon had said, and why. Then the young minister asked them to unite with him in prayer for the unsaved, and to keep on praying. They responded with gladness and they persevered. They found that "the most important service any Christian can render is to pray."

The most valuable member of this congregation—according to the pastor, in speaking later to young ministers—was a humble woman who never could leave her room and her bed. There she interceded for the unsaved and unchurched, one after another. Always by name, she brought them to the mercy seat. When they confessed Christ and joined the church there was joy in her upper room—joy like that in glory.

The most vital work any pastor can do is to lead his peo-

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ple in praying for unsaved and unchurched neighbors and friends. If such intercession is to prevail it needs to be specific and persevering. The minister should guide his friends in praying and working for the salvation of certain men and women, boys and girls. Herein lies the secret of power in parish evangelism. "Lord, teach us to pray!" How simple, and yet how sublime!

SUGGESTED READINGS

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- *Hewitt, Arthur W.: *Highland Shepherds*. Willett Clark & Co., Chicago, 1939.
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- *The asterisk indicates a book in line with the preceding chapter.

CHAPTER IV

SOUL-WINNING SERMONS

WE HAVE been thinking about the pastor's leadership of lay evangelists. Now we are to consider a kind of work in which few of them can take part; that is, evangelistic preaching. It pleases God to redeem sinful men through "the foolishness of preaching," as well as by other means. The sermon that saves the soul brings the hearer face to face with the Son of God and moves him to accept Jesus as Saviour and Lord. In every soul-winning message there is a note of urgency. "Now is the accepted time."

In judging a sermon read it as a whole. Note the spirit that prevails. Study the text and the topic, as well as the conclusion. By the conclusion one means the latter part. This is what reveals the controlling purpose. In a soul-winning message the concluding portion may be longer than in some sermons today. The thoughtful preacher is careful about the first few paragraphs, as he ought to be, in order to insure attention and interest. The pastoral evangelist is even more concerned about the last few paragraphs. They should be persuasive. Indeed, they should be almost irresistible.

Such is the theory. But the facts are not so simple. In the work of the pulpit, evangelism and Christian nurture belong together. Likewise, on the farm the amount of corn in the fall depends on the quality of the seed and the cultivation of the soil. When one turns to the printed messages

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of evangelical divines one can make no clear distinction between the soul-winning sermon and the pastoral discourse. In the pulpit work of the parish evangelist the two elements should often be inseparable.

In a volume of sermons issued by Spurgeon when he was twenty-three years of age the title is *The Saint and the Saviour*, or *The Progress of the Soul in the Knowledge of Jesus*. The twelve messages are intended to be pastoral. But in present-day terms most of them are evangelistic. For instance, the fourth is about "Jesus Pardoning"; and the fifth, "Joy at Conversion." After each of the twelve there is a printed appeal "To the Unconverted Hearer." These post-scripts average more than two pages. Throughout them the minister is speaking directly to the unsaved reader, and pleading with him to accept Christ as Saviour, at once.

The pastoral element, too, is everywhere in Spurgeon's preaching. For example, take his volume, *Twelve Soul-Winning Sermons*. He chose them out of his printed messages after he had sent forth 1,650. The third discourse is typical. The subject is "All Things are Ready—Come!" The minister develops four lines of thought. The first shows that God is always ready. The second insists that saints should keep coming to God. The third invites the sinner to come now. The fourth deals with his unreadiness to come in faith, confessing his sins. Such preaching is steeped in simplicity. That may be why it attracted the sinner and blessed the saint.

How different is the streamlined sermon today! Some wag says that it calls for "three wisecracks and filler." Let us glance at a recent model. The subject is "The Mystery of Religion." There is no text. The "New Preaching" is inductive. Here it calls for no mention of Christ or God until

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the end. The closing words must be as unexpected and climactic as in a short story by O. Henry. In the sermon, however, the last few lines are religious.

This is part of the "filler": "Religion is not art, with its magic beauties; science, with its wondrous discoveries; philosophy, with its lofty speculations; creed, with its baffling dogmas. What then is religion? That is a secret! Let us pray."

After a few years of practice the parson can spin such a web without opening a book or tiring his brain. The wisecracks come easily to the clever master of phrases. This sort of so-called preaching calls for little work, little time, little religion. But, alas, it does little good. The occasional wisecrack may sound like the utterance of a sage. But it does not point the soul to God.

On the contrary, the sermon that is to win recruits must be the product of hard work in the spirit of prayer. While each message ought to differ from every other, in certain respects they should all be alike. In general the difficulties of preparation are of three kinds.

The first has to do with the source of the materials. They are chiefly scriptural. The soul-winning preacher must know his mother's Bible, and be able to use it as "the sword of the Spirit."

The second difficulty relates to the form of the message. It should be doctrinal, at least indirectly. The man in the pulpit should know what he believes, and why. As a rule he should preach positively and kindly, not negatively and belligerently. He should make the truths of God seem clear and luminous. All the while he should preserve the feeling of mystery and wonder.

The third difficulty concerns the style of the message. It

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should be interesting and clear. It should appeal to the sort of people who heard the Master gladly. Most of all, it should grip the soul of the sinner and lead him to the Cross.

BIBLICAL IN SUBSTANCE

Evangelistic preaching is Biblical. The reference here is to substance rather than form, and to spirit even more than substance. While soul-winning sermons are saturated with the essence of the Bible, usually they are not expository. The writer feels that there is a call for "preaching from the Bible." But there are various ways of using it for the glory of God. In feeding the flock one serves as a teacher. In appealing to the unsaved one speaks as an advocate. Expository preaching edifies. Evangelistic sermons save. One kind of pulpit work is as difficult as the other. There is no easy way to preach well.

How does the soul winner use the Bible in the pulpit? He starts with a text. As Spurgeon says, often it is the text, not the sermon, that saves the sinner. As a rule the text is short. It should always make sense. It should require little explanation. Often it should be striking. "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots?" The appeal is to the imagination.

The passage may be from the Old Testament. To the soul-winning preacher the Hebrew Bible is one whole hemisphere of the scriptural world. In the first five volumes by Spurgeon there are 128 sermons. Slightly more than half are from the Old Testament. This proportion, however, is unusual. Perhaps one from the Old for two from the New would be nearer the average with soul-winning preachers. This is the ratio in Spurgeon's volume, *Twelve Soul-Winning Sermons*.

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One of these is about the brazen serpent, or, rather, the Saviour of dying sinners. He is the Physician of Souls. As elsewhere with Spurgeon, the message is the grace of God in healing the malady of sin. Whatever the text, that soul-winning preacher looked on it in the light that streams from the Cross. In this case he had a clear warrant from the Gospels. Just before the golden text of the Bible he found these other words, which appeal to the eye of the soul: "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life."

Why not preach Christ from His own Bible? The Old Testament was the only Bible that our Saviour ever saw. In Spurgeon's volume, *The Soul-Winner*, he quotes with approval an elderly minister's criticism of a young man's sermon. When the young brother asked the veteran preacher to appraise the discourse the older man hesitated. But when the young parson insisted the response was frank:

"I did not like it at all! There was no Christ in your sermon." "No, because I did not see Christ in my text." "Oh, but do you not know that in every little town or hamlet in England there is a road leading to London? Whenever I get hold of a text I say to myself, 'There is a road from here to Jesus Christ, and I mean to keep on this track until I get to Him!'"

The young man protested, "Suppose you are preaching from a text which says nothing about Christ?" "Then I will go over hedge and ditch till I get to Him." It would be possible to carry this idea further than the facts warrant. Many of the fathers did so. Some of their allegorical interpretations of the Old Testament were far-fetched. They even preached about the Cross of Christ from texts in the

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Song of Solomon! Still, it is a safe principle of Christian hermeneutics to interpret the Old Testament in the light of the New. Otherwise one might "preach" like a Jewish rabbi. Another safe rule is to start with words that point to the Saviour.

The soul-winning text is usually from the New Testament. Often one turns to the Gospels, especially Saint Luke and Saint John. In a volume by Henry Ward Beecher, *Plymouth Pulpit*, there are twenty-six messages. They come between March and November. This is what we term the off season for soul winning. Two of the sermons have to do with Easter. Three are meditations at the Sacrament. Of the other twenty-one, nine are evangelistic. Six of the nine are from the Gospels. One subject is "The Prodigal Son." We think of Beecher as a pulpit orator, not an evangelist. But where among books of sermons today can we find so much emphasis on the winning of souls?

One of these messages is about "The New Birth." Beecher says in part:

I believe in revivals of religion. . . . The great work of God which has been carried on in England under Moody and Sankey is an instance of the efficacy of revivals; and there have been other cogent instances in New England and elsewhere. Though there may be much chaff in the harvest, the wheat is genuine, notwithstanding. Though there may be much straw, the flour is not on that account to be rejected. No matter how many men think they are born again, and no matter how many fall by the way, there are thousands—and the number may be infinitely increased—who, beginning, hold on, continue to the end, and are finally saved.

At a theological seminary when Beecher was in his prime he spoke on "Successful Preaching." The heart of the discourse was the text, "I will make you fishers of men." These are excerpts: "Men are in danger of eternal death, and you

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must catch them." "Fish where the men are." "That is where a theological seminary fails—it does not teach enough about men." "These men [students] fall into what we may call idolatry of sermons. They think the sermon is everything. Christ's words to them are, 'I will make you fishers of men.'" "The most elegantly finished discourse would be a bad one if it did not do the work."

If the minister is a fisher of men he knows how to preach from a passage in the Gospels. Whenever he announces such a text the people look forward to a sermon about the Living Christ. In each of the Gospels almost every paragraph is about the Master. Wherever He appears on the sacred page He is the center of the scene. Others are in the picture only because of their relation to Him. Nevertheless, it is possible to start with a golden text from Saint Luke and talk entertainingly for twenty or twenty-five minutes without once bringing the hearer face to face with the Lord Jesus.

It is easy for some of us to be interesting when talking about something on the human level. That is where we feel most at home. The current practice is to start with the hearer where he lives; that is, on the ground floor. Very well! But why keep him there? Why not assume that he has come to church to get away from his lower self and live for a while with the Lord?

Especially is Christian idealism essential in preaching to young folk. In a college chapel this motto appears on the minister's side of the pulpit: "Sir, we would see Jesus!" On another college pulpit this is the injunction: "Keep within twenty minutes!" Perhaps it would be well to have both mottoes. But the one at the top should be about Christ.

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Even in a college or university chapel it is possible to hold attention while speaking about Christ.

Such pulpit work, as a rule, does not center in the Lord Jesus. According to W. A. Visser 't Hooft, General Secretary of the World's Student Federation, the most fruitful preaching to young people today is where the minister soberly presents the Master, and keeps self out of sight. This is hard to do. Both in orthodox circles and among liberals, says this leader in young people's work, the man in the pulpit usually calls attention to himself more than to the Saviour.

But there are noteworthy exceptions. While Elliott Speer was headmaster of the boys' school at Mount Hermon he was much in demand as a preacher at preparatory schools, colleges, and universities. When the young minister was suddenly cut down, his father, Robert Elliott Speer, went through the son's papers. The father discovered that in preaching to students the son had made it his rule to speak directly about the Lord Jesus.

Whether the hearers are young or old, there is a temptation to accord the Master a secondary place. This is neither good religion nor good art. For instance, take the paragraph about His forgiving and healing the paralytic, Luke 5:18-26. In the sermon one may stress the peculiarities of Oriental architecture, the overcoming of obstacles, the need for teamwork, the fact that paralysis is often due to the sins of a man's youth, or something else on the human level. But where is the Lord Jesus?

This passage is in the Gospels because it makes clear and luminous a fact about Christ. Listen to the key verse, which should be the text of the sermon: "That ye may know that the Son of man hath power upon earth to forgive sins, (he said unto the sick of the palsy), I say unto thee,

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Arise, and take up thy couch, and go into thine house." The message ought to concern the authority, or the power, of the Living Christ to pardon sin. Those other human beings, especially the one most in need, ought to appear in the picture. But the Lord Jesus ought to be the center of interest, and the light ought to shine full on His face. This is largely what one means by "the fine art of preaching."

These are the ideals of the pulpit where the appointed lessons follow the Church Year. In summer conferences for young clergymen the bishops of the Protestant Episcopal Church are stressing the preaching values in the Prayer Book. This in turn gives the place of honor to the Gospel Lesson for the day. During the Christian Year the clergyman who preaches from these lessons can present every vital truth about the Incarnate Lord.

Among the Lutheran friends, also, the situation is heartening. The Board of Publication of the United Lutheran Church is issuing volumes of popular sermons to show young pastors how to use the pericope as the basis of the message on the Lord's Day. In one of these books, *The Parable of the Empty Soul* (1941), the title sermon, on Luke 11:24-26, is by Harry F. Baughman, professor of preaching at Gettysburg Seminary. He is showing young men how to prepare and deliver messages that center in Christ.

The evangelistic text may be from the book of Acts. It is our most complete and satisfactory guide in the delicate art of winning souls. One of the most fruitful texts is the Apostle's answer to the jailer's cry, "What must I do to be saved?" Once when Dwight L. Moody was preaching in St. Louis he knew that his sermon was to be printed in one of the city newspapers. Nine times in that message he de-

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liberately repeated his text: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

That printed message found its way into the city prison. The caption about the jailer who was caught struck the eye of a hardened criminal, Valentine Burke. Because of the oft-repeated text he became a Christian. Later he met the evangelist. Years afterward when Moody visited St. Louis he saw Burke but did not recognize him. He had become an assistant to the sheriff. At one time this former criminal was entrusted with \$60,000, which he carried to the bank unescorted. After Moody became aware of these facts he carried with him two photographs. The one showed Burke the criminal; the other, Burke the Christian. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

Closely allied with the book of Acts are the Epistles. They were addressed to believers, but they are full of the Gospel that saves. For example, in Truett's book, *Follow Thou Me* (1932), most of the fourteen sermons came out of revival services at Nashville. Of the fourteen, three are from texts in the Epistles. One of the most characteristic topics is "The Meaning of Christ's Death," on the text I Peter 3:18. The controlling purpose is evident from the start: "Our text is a clear statement of the way whereby one can be saved." The message leads up to a tender and moving plea for the hearer to accept Christ.

Occasionally the text comes from the book of Revelation. In days of chaos the Apocalypse ought to suggest many a message of hope and cheer. In the first volume of sermonic addresses issued by Joseph R. Sizoo, now at Saint Nicholas Collegiate Reformed Church in New York, the title is *The Kingdom Cometh* (1930). The closing message is "The

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Romance of the Kingdom." The appeal is for Christian optimism on the basis of revealed truth as it is in Christ, in the Church, and in the Gospel. We who believe ought to look up, for the day of our redemption draweth nigh. The coming of the Kingdom depends on Christ!

DOCTRINAL IN FORM

Evangelistic preaching is doctrinal, at least indirectly. It should never be scholastic. Since the soul-winning sermon is popular in style it may not seem to be doctrinal, or even intellectual. This may account for the ministerial prejudice against the preaching of doctrine. More probably the objection has been due to the heavy, wooden abstractions that have sometimes posed as doctrinal discourses.

Henry Ward Beecher once began to preach a soul-winning sermon by extolling pictorial preaching, over against the pulpit use of doctrine. But why not be doctrinal and pictorial at the same time? Doctrine is another name for teaching. The term has reference to the form of the message, whereas the pictorial quality is in the style. The doctrine comes from God's Book; the pictorial element, from the preacher's imagination.

Beecher himself used doctrine in the pulpit continuously. In each of the nine evangelistic sermons mentioned above he proclaims his understanding of some Christian truth. He is scarcely a master of theology. His interpretations are likely to be pictorial rather than exact. But again and again he shows how one can preach Christian doctrine imaginatively, for the glory of God. In his unique fashion the Brooklyn divine was a popular evangelistic preacher.

In a far different way Dwight L. Moody shows how to use doctrine. In his book, *The Way to God*, each of the

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nine sermons has a doctrinal core. When Moody and Sankey made their triumphal tour through the cities of Great Britain the doctrine which the evangelist kept proclaiming was the love of the Father God. In the tour of the same cities nine years later the dominant note was the call for repentance and restitution. This time, also, the evangelist made a profound impression. But the results were not so gratifying as when Moody relied on the old, old story of redeeming grace. This is the account of a friendly eye-witness:

When Mr. Moody was in Birmingham early last year I was struck by the change in the general tone of his preaching. He insisted very much on the duty of repentance. . . . He was as earnest, as vigorous, as impressive as before. People were as deeply moved. Hundreds went into the inquiry room every night. But the results, as far as I can learn, have been inconsiderable. . . . [Formerly] he exulted in the free grace of God. The grace was to lead men to repentance—to a complete change of life. His joy was contagious. Men leaped from darkness into light, and lived a Christian life afterward. The “do penance” preaching has had no such results.

These words are from Robert William Dale, a mighty preacher and theologian. The report appears in his biography, written by his son, A. W. W. Dale. This is the end of the father’s account: “I wrote to him [Moody] about it a few weeks ago. He said in reply that it had ‘set him a-thinking,’ and he wanted to talk it over with me; but I have not been able to see him.” With Dale’s general estimate of the two campaigns other ministerial observers agreed. They concluded that while there is a place for the preaching of man’s duty to God, the truth that saves is God’s goodness to man. Preach grace to the sinner, and ethics to the saint!

During the course of the year the pastoral evangelist

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should present every vital Christian truth, from the holiness of God and the sinfulness of man to the wonders of redeeming love and the shadow of the Great White Throne. Often he should speak about the glories of the life everlasting. The emphasis should be on the grace of God. He makes Himself known in the Book, and supremely in Christ. Whatever the doctrine in hand, the saving power is in Christ and His Cross, through the Spirit of God. The truth most sure to save is that of Calvary. A vision of the Cross melts the hardest heart and makes it ready to receive the love of God. For such popular preaching of doctrine turn to the book by William M. Clow, *The Cross in Christian Experience*.

POPULAR IN STYLE

The style of the evangelistic message should be popular. It should appeal to ordinary people. If that were all one wished to do one might resort to sensationalism. This term relates to pulpit work that calls attention to the preacher and his sermon, not the Saviour and His Cross. "No man can bear witness to Christ and himself at the same time." Nevertheless, pulpit pyrotechnics may seem to succeed, at least for a time. Especially in a downtown church one can appeal to the passing throng. Sensational preaching may keep on drawing crowds. Even so, what does it accomplish for the Kingdom?

Sometimes preaching is secular without being sensational. A few years ago in Baltimore Don Frank Fenn made an interesting experiment. He devoted the Sunday evening sermons to current topics, such as War, Crime and Psychiatry. Partly because of publicity the results numerically were gratifying. The audiences at night were as large as the con-

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gregations in the morning. But in looking back the rector could not trace to those services a single baptism or confirmation. In the book, *Parish Administration* (1938), he writes: "People had been in church, rather than some place else, but as for permanent results I am afraid they did not exist. It is easy to fill a church if we are willing to resort to cheap publicity." "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

It is possible, however, to be popular while one is preaching the Gospel. Soul-winning sermons are notable for simplicity. While never puerile, they are often childlike. The truths may be almost self-evident. In any one message there need not be many large ideas, but the ones chosen should be luminous.

The style should be concrete, not abstract. "Three fourths of writing well consists in giving definite, carefully chosen facts, and plenty of them. The other fourth doesn't matter!" While this dictum is extreme, it is at least three fourths true! Strange to tell, it is harder to prepare and preach this sort of simple, factual sermon than to present the subject philosophically and ponderously. The same is true about writing a book. If anyone doubts this, let him try both ways.

Evangelistic preaching should be notable for human interest. Moody used to chuckle while he told about a Scotch parson who was expostulating with a sister for sleeping in church. He suggested that she take snuff enough to keep her awake. "Mon," she replied, "you'd better put a little more snuff in your sermons!" That may not be easy to do. It depends partly on "the surprise power." Spurgeon says that a good deal of preaching is like patching a garment

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without knotting the thread. There is nothing that sticks. The monotony is soporific.

One way of insuring attention is to use worthy illustrations. In Moody's sermon about the love of God there are nine. Most of them are fairly long. So is the sermon itself. As a Yankee Moody was thrifty. But in preaching he never economized on two things: the Bible and local color. While the warp of every message was from the Book, the woof was from the lives of ordinary men and women.

Instead of saying abstractly, "Down through the ages countless pious mothers in Israel have devotedly loved their wandering sons and errant daughters, even unto the sorrowful death"—Moody is like the Master. In an illustration there is only one mother. But she is typical of many. She exclaims, "This is my boy; I love him still!" For illustrations still more effective, and on a higher level of culture, read the book of sermons by James S. Stewart, *The Gates of New Life* (1940).

The style of the soul-winning sermon is simple. It calls no attention to itself. It is like a window through which one looks out on the glories of earth and sky. The delivery, too, is unaffected. The man in the pulpit is earnestly talking things over with his friend in the back pew. Because the preacher is sincere he is natural. He is thinking about his subject, not himself; about the hearer, not the sermon. The evangelist preaches for the salvation of the sinner, not for the salvation of the sermon.

"No man can give at once the impression that he himself is clever and that Christ is mighty to save. . . . The Holy Spirit is felt only when the witness is unconscious of self, and when others are unconscious of him. No man is being

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blessed by the Holy Spirit when his hearers say, 'What an able sermon!'

Once again, evangelistic preaching is personal. It has nothing to do with personalities, in the offensive sense of the term. But the effectiveness of the soul-winning sermon depends largely on "the individualizing power." Such preaching starts with God. He is Spirit; that is, the Ideal Person. He is ever with us. He is no absentee landlord. He knows. He cares. He is able to do for men what they never dream of asking. In our pulpit work have we been true to the facts about God? If not, let us learn to see Him in the face of Christ.

Be personal! The man in the pew is a human being. To some theologians mankind may be only an abstraction. Sin may seem impersonal. But to the pastoral evangelist the friend in the pew is one who counts, both here and in heaven. His soul is worth more than all the things on earth. His sin is a tragedy second to none short of hell. A man's sins concern his relations with God, as well as loved ones and others. When a guilty mortal comes to the Cross he finds pardon, cleansing, and peace. Such an experience is intensely personal. Even though by his sin a man has engulfed a continent in war, his chief offense is against God. "Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned."

"Individualizing power" has marked every soul-winning preacher from the Lord Jesus and the Apostle Peter to William Booth and Gipsy Smith. Where the impractical divine can address sixty persons so as to make each of them feel that the sermon relates to men always and everywhere except here and now, the soul winner can speak to six hundred or six thousand so as to make every man feel that the message is for him personally. "Thou art the man!" "I have a

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word from God for thee!" On the human level this ability to reach the heart and conscience of the man in the pew is probably the chief asset of the soul-winning preacher. The power lies in the imagination.

In homiletics class one day a student asked how Spurgeon could make this impression almost every time he preached. Instead of replying directly the teacher requested his young friend to examine three or four volumes by Spurgeon and then report his findings. A week or two later the student told the class that early in life the London preacher had formed the habit of speaking at times directly to his hearer, especially toward the end of the sermon. In less skillful hands such direct address might seem to be only a pulpit trick. Nevertheless, in a sermon it should be as natural to address the hearer as it is in a prayer to call upon God. However, it is possible to do either too often.

Evangelistic preaching is direct. It is fearless. In the best sense it is personal. The man in the pulpit is no mere essayist who has been rambling about in a garden and plucking beautiful flowers so as to bedeck the Cross. He is an ambassador from King Christ, with a message that calls for decision, here and now. Would the ambassador from the Court of Saint James tone down the words of his monarch? No! In like manner, without being abrupt or tactless, the soul-winning preacher addresses the man in the pew.

A lesson about the pulpit use of pronouns once came to John Kelman, of Free Saint George's Church in Edinburgh, and helped make him a power among the students at the university:

I remember an old man long ago contrasting my sermons with those of an evangelist in a neighboring tent. "In the tent they aye say *You*, but when ye're preaching ye say *We*!" The shrewd judgment, in-

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tended for approbation, led to a change in my use of personal pronouns. . . . Effective preaching makes men hear as individuals. . . . It is not incumbent on us to soften down the Word of God to suit the tastes of a refined audience. We used to be warned not to preach, "He who, so to speak, believeth not, shall, as it were, be damned."¹

In matters homiletical there is much to learn from Harry Emerson Fosdick. In almost every sermon, from time to time, he addresses the individual hearer. For instance, on a certain Sunday just before New Year's Day the subject was "Every Man a Gambler." Somewhat inductively the minister developed the sort of practical creed for which any man should be willing to venture his life. These were the closing words:

How one wishes one could be sure that this would come to some conscience here! Friend, you cannot stay neutral. You cannot move into this new year staking your life on nothing. You may say that you will not make up your mind, but you cannot help making up your life. You may hold your opinions in suspense, but you cannot hold your character in suspense. That gets made up one way or another, and it gets made up because, willy-nilly, deep in the creative centers of your spirit you can stake your life on something. I plead for high stakes on high issues, and, above all, for some youth here who will take his life and throw it for a world redeemed.²

Direct preaching calls for truth from God, the Ideal Person, addressed to man, the sinful person. The way to bring the two together is to preach Christ. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself." The reference is to the Cross. Every minister should make a study of what the Bible teaches about the Cross. The most wondrous texts are notable for personal pronouns: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us

¹ *The War and Preaching*, Yale University Press, 1919, pp. 208, 211.

² *The Power to See It Through*, Harper & Brothers, 1935, p. 160.

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from all unrighteousness." "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." This is the Gospel that saves and transforms.

Last of all, evangelistic preaching is urgent. The appeal is to the will. The will is the entire personality in action. One seeks to win the hearer as a man, soul and body, for time and eternity. Speaking broadly, there are two ways of moving the will. One is through the intellectual powers; the other, through the emotions. In almost every sermon one should appeal to both head and heart. As a rule the first portion of the message is chiefly to the intellect; the latter part may be more to the emotions. But in the fine art of preaching all our rules break down. The main thing is to have a message from God and then preach it with a soul on fire. According to Father Taylor, the evangelist to seamen, the preacher must "take something hot out of his own heart and shove it into mine."

Whatever the tone color of the sermon, the aim is to move the will of the hearer Christward. In starting to prepare the message one should fix this goal in mind. Then one should map the course so as to reach the desired summit. Toward the end of the sermon one should bring everything to bear on this matter of a personal decision for Christ, here and now. Instead of an old-fashioned highfaluting oratorical finale, there is more likely to be what John Henry Jowett styles "the wooing note." "Choose! Choose now! Your choice is brief but endless!"

On a Sunday evening in Chicago Dwight L. Moody was preaching to a vast multitude. He brought every hearer face to face with Christ as the Son of God. In his closing words the evangelist asked the hearer to pray during the week and come back next Sunday evening to take a stand

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for Christ. But late on the night of that closing plea the city was swept by fire. The tabernacle was destroyed. Moody never again addressed that assembly.

Twenty-two years later, at the Chicago World's Fair, he related these facts. With tears in his eyes he said that never again had he dared suggest to an unsaved hearer the postponement of his decision to become a Christian. "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation."

Listen to the last few words of a message by Moody. He has been speaking about the Father God. The preceding sentences have dealt with His love as a banner.

Any poor sinner can come under that banner today. His banner over us is love. Blessed Gospel! Blessed, precious news! Believe it today; receive it into your heart; and enter into a new life. Let the love of God be shed abroad in your heart by the Holy Ghost today; it will drive away darkness. It will drive away gloom; and peace and joy shall be yours.

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CHAPTER V

MIDWEEK MEETINGS

THE congregation that stresses evangelism needs a mid-week service. It affords the minister an opportunity to promote the cause dear to his heart. In an occasional parish it may be feasible also to have a class in personal work. But it is not wise to multiply meetings. In a special class the minister would serve as teacher. The members would consist chiefly of persons who attend the midweek service. The class would meet in the autumn or else after New Year's. In either case both the minister and his lay friends have enough to do in evangelism without devoting an evening a week to an extra meeting.

But other duties should not prevent pastor and people from assembling for social worship during the midst of the week. This service ought to be the fountainhead of parish evangelism. The organizing idea is simple. On the Wednesday evenings before Christmas one builds up the morale of the people. At each service twenty-five minutes of helpful worship lead up to a like period of friendly conversation about part of a book in the Bible. An easy place to start is with the First Epistle of Saint John. It will keep one busy feeding the souls of the saints for several weeks, perhaps eight or ten.

After a course of Bible readings the friends should be ready for something directly concerning evangelism. Here too one has informal conversations about chosen parts of

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the Book. Usually the best time for these discussions about personal work is between New Year's and Easter. That is the harvest season of the Christian year.

READINGS ABOUT PERSONAL WORK

The readings are from the New Testament. They begin with the Gospels and may extend over into Acts. Each of those five books has much to say about personal evangelism. It would be profitable to take the people through one of the Gospels, and then through Acts, stopping wherever the sacred record has to do with the individual soul. But that would require many weeks. There is some advantage in selecting passages here and there, and in tarrying with each one as long as the people desire.

Ordinarily the unit of thought is a paragraph, though it may be a chapter. The Bible was written by books and paragraphs, not by chapters and verses. These modern divisions are for convenience in finding passages quickly. This is exactly what the people should be able to do with each chosen paragraph. They should know in advance what part of the Book they are to read and discuss at the next meeting. One way to keep them informed is through the weekly bulletin, or calendar. It is good, also, to hand out immediately after Christmas a mimeographed list of the passages for the coming quarter.

The list is for the layman's Bible. A card is better than a sheet of paper. Whatever the form, the list is for use in private devotions and at family prayers. The preparation of the list calls for time and work. This kind of study by the minister should be as interesting as it is profitable. During the period before Christmas he should enjoy doing in his study what he will soon be asking the people to do in

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their homes. Whatever the Biblical passages, he should first know them himself. Then he will be ready to guide the readings and the discussions.

In making up the list the minister should indicate each passage clearly. But he should not suggest dates for the various readings. In leading the discussions he should proceed quickly or slowly as the facts warrant. Ordinarily each passage calls for one session. But there may be materials enough for two. The list below is too long. It affords materials enough for two or three successive winter periods. Even so, the list is not complete. It merely shows some of the possibilities. Instead of adopting this one, each man should compile a list of his own. Be sure to make it short!

Luke 5:1-11	John 1:43-51	John 20:19-31
Luke 5:27-32	John 3:1-17	Acts 8:26-40
Luke 9:57-62	John 4:1-26	Acts 9:1-22
Luke 15 (a part)	John 4:27-42	Acts 10:1-48
Luke 19:1-10	John 5:1-16	Acts 16:9-15
Luke 23:39-48	John 9:1-38	Acts 16:25-34
John 1:29-42	John 12:20-36	Acts 20:17-38

Let us glance at three typical passages. The first is Luke 5:1-11, which is about deep-sea fishing. Let us assume that the majority of those present at the midweek service have read the paragraph in their homes, and that they have asked the Lord to show them what it means. They wish to learn what bearing it has on their daily lives, and on the problems of the parish. At the beginning of the discussion they should read the chosen paragraph in concert, somewhat slowly, under the leadership of the minister. He should bring out the prose rhythm of the King James Version.

After this concert reading there should be friendly conversation, with frequent reference to the passage. Here again the minister leads. Otherwise the discussions would

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roam far afield. While interesting and entertaining, promiscuous talk leads to nothing tangible. Whenever the friends lose sight of the subject, one way to bring them back is to have them read together a verse or two of the chosen passage. A much better plan is to keep them so interested that their thoughts will not wander.

To start the discussion the minister may ask, "What is this passage about?" A deacon may reply, "Fishing!" Another layman will speak up: "Yes, but there are no fish!" Both men will be thinking about their experiences last summer on the lake. All the fish seemed to be taking a holiday elsewhere! If either brother wishes to stand, so as to make a little speech about fishing, the minister suggests that his friend remain seated. He has been busy all day and he ought not to exert himself! Incidentally, if he remains seated he may talk as at the dinner table, briefly and to the point.

The reference to fishing last summer is timely. The use of local color is to be desired. It tends to make the people think of the Bible as a contemporary book. On the other hand, some of them may forget that it is the fountainhead of the Christian faith. Thus far there has been nothing about Jesus. Hence the minister asks, "What do these words tell about the Lord?" One of the women replies, "He is a lover of outdoors." Another says: "He is more concerned about human beings than about the scenery. In the Gospels our Lord teaches a good deal about nature, but never apart from God and people."

Now we come to the heart of the passage. Like almost every other paragraph in the Gospels this one has to do with the Lord Jesus. His words here suggest something about the winning of souls. In response to a kindly question one of the laymen says: "The Master is calling us to engage in

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deep-sea fishing. That means going out and trying to take our community for Christ. There was a time when we were winning souls. But recently we seem to have quit. We have been sitting on the shore mending our nets. Now the Lord is calling to us: 'Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught.'

This is what the minister has been waiting for. In fact, he may forget himself and preach a little sermon. He may begin by telling about Adoniram Judson's saying, "Expect great things from God; attempt great things for God." Negatively, this means that we Christians are to avoid "the Lilliputian Heresy." We must not think of doing little things for the Lord, and in a little way. We ought to be as zealous about winning souls here at home as Judson was over in Burma. But the wise leader holds himself in check. In the pulpit he can have his say, but at the midweek service he is not the speaker of the house.

To keep from talking unduly one can use the blackboard. On it one can write the subject, as well as the location of the passage. As the friends bring out interesting ideas one can jot them down. The people are much more likely to remember what they see as well as hear. If these truths come out in a sermon six months later, the friends will be glad to have had a part in preparing the message. Just now they should be getting ready to carry home a few pregnant ideas on parish evangelism. The next few lines indicate what one minister put on the board, but only a part at a time. Under his leadership the people brought out the facts. He did most of the phrasing:

Luke 5:1-11

Taking This Community for Christ

These words come to us as a people tonight.

The lesson is about winning souls here at home.

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The time for making ready has almost passed by.
The Lord is calling us to service in this community.
The time for the ingathering is at hand.
In this work for God everyone should be humble.

The idea is to let the people bring out each truth. Then they can discuss it, pro and con. The method is suggestive, not exhaustive. The aim is to encourage congregational evangelism, rather than Bible study for its own sake. It is wise to say little about "study." That sounds like work, and the people may be all worn out. It is better to bring out a few vital truths and discuss them with reference to the parish than to deal with the passage intensively. In that case the people might remember little that is practical. If the minister is a teacher, not merely a talker, he can show them how to enjoy reading the Bible.

CASE STUDIES IN EVANGELISM

The next passage is John 1:29-42. It relates to personal work with young men. The modern name here is case-work evangelism. In the study of religion, as of medicine or law, the approved method now is to employ typical cases, and to deal with each of them at some length. In teaching evangelism it is difficult to secure contemporary cases, such as those that appear in the Appendix. One is likely to divulge what should be kept secret. But there can be no objection to the use of object lessons from the Bible. The passage before us suggests some of the principles which govern the winning of men today.

At later meetings these principles will emerge again and again. Skillful use of repetition is inseparable from teaching. Ere long the people should begin to discover the most vital truths for themselves. Early in the present hour one of them

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may speak of the difference between the first part of this chapter and the second. The first half shows how the Son of God came to redeem the world from sin. The second half tells how He began by winning a group of young men, one after another. The Christian way of transforming the world is to start with the man across the street.

Another layman remarks, "The way to win a man is to bring him face to face with Jesus." This was the method of John the Baptist. In the passage before us he is preaching a short sermon. His theme is the Lamb of God, or, as we should say, the Christ of the Cross. Because of John's preaching the young hearers wish to meet the Lord Himself. To each inquirer He makes Himself known in a different fashion. But in every case the result is the same. What wins most of these young men is personal work. Is it not so today?

On the human side the emphasis is individual. Instead of speaking about "individual work with individuals," the sacred writers keep to the singular. They deal with each case by itself. Personal evangelism means that a brother brings a brother, and a friend introduces a friend. It all seems simple. However the inquirer comes, the Lord Jesus is the Saviour. His favorite method of winning men is through personal work. This means individual work with the individual. Back of the worker is the Spirit of God.

If these facts take up the entire period, one should rejoice. At the close one can ask the people to think about the passage for another week. The following Wednesday one can lead them in bringing out still other truths. Perhaps a layman will report, "I notice that a man deals with a man of much the same years and station in life." A trustee may remark: "It is important to win the leader of men. What if

Andrew had never brought Simon Peter to the Lord?" During the discussion each one present should be asking prayerfully, "Whom can I bring?" In every parish there is some person who ought to deal with the potential leader.

Still another layman says: "The worker's emphasis is positive. My tendency is to talk negatively. I like to argue. But argument drives a man away from Christ. What if Philip had argued with his friend?" To Nathanael's theoretical objections the personal worker simply replied, "Come and see!" If the two men had tarried where they were and engaged in a verbal battle they might have missed seeing the Lord. There is a place for the scholarly defense of the faith. But in dealing with a practical man one should keep to the simplicities.

The last contribution may be from a woman who has never spoken out in meeting: "The worker relies on personal experience. Andrew says to Peter, and Philip says to Nathanael, 'We have found.' When Nathanael asks a question, Philip replies, 'Come and see!'" This woman's comment calls for discussion. The old-fashioned experience meeting may have had its drawbacks, but the present custom of keeping quiet about Christian experience is still further from the ideal. Why not tell a brother or friend what difference Christ makes in the heart where He dwells? Personal work often means telling another about one's friendship with Christ.

If any reader protests that the lay folk who utter these sayings must be unusual, the point is well taken. The unique fact is that they have been reading the Bible in their homes, not at random, but under a teacher whom they love. Another strange fact is that they can discuss these things informally with a minister who knows how to listen as well as

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talk. As for the ability to express themselves, that grows through intelligent use. The pastor who tries the method will discover that his people can bring out of any suitable passage things both new and old. Why not cultivate the resources of the laymen?

These Bible readings will suggest future sermons. One of them may be on "The Glory of the Ordinary." This is Clovis G. Chappell's subject in the book, *Men That Count* (1937). On the human level the thought concerns Andrew. He was the two-talent brother of famous Peter, as well as the partner of well-known James and John. As a winner of souls Andrew was equal to any of the disciples who became better known. The inconspicuous Apostle deserves to be "the patron saint of personal workers." He is specially dear to the hearts of Scotchmen. His example should encourage the average layman, who hesitates to do individual work with the individual.

PRINCIPLES OF SOUL WINNING

A still easier passage to discuss at the midweek meeting is Acts 8:26-40, about the winning of the Secretary of the Treasury in Ethiopia. This is the country that Mussolini recently stole and then lost. It may change hands again. Instead of talking much about geography and history, however, it is better to discuss personal work.

The people will bring out so many ideas that there will need to be a second meeting. In the first the emphasis may be on the Holy Spirit as the Presiding Officer; in the second, on the way a deacon interviews a distinguished stranger in behalf of Christ. In personal work there is a blending of the divine and the human. Let us begin with the divine, and keep it first.

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How does the Holy Spirit lead a man to Christ? The Spirit chooses the soul winner. As a rule the man whom He selects is already engaged in Christian service. This one is a lay evangelist. He is an officer in the First Church of Jerusalem. But he has been holding special services in the city of Samaria. Now the Presiding Spirit transfers him to the open country, where he is to deal with one man. Evidently the Spirit of God watches over different sorts of Christian service. He is with the leader in the city assembly and with the toiler alone out in the country.

The Holy Spirit guides the worker. This is why the deacon can find his way far to the south and reach the spot just when the government official is passing by in his chariot. Like Abraham of old, the lay preacher fares forth under sealed orders. In terms of today, he is "flying blind." But he goes out in faith, not knowing whither. However, the Lord knows. He causes the lay pilgrim to know when he comes to his journey's end. This leading is what the Friends call "the inner light."

In a recent book about rural pastors, *Highland Shepherds* (1939), Arthur W. Hewitt writes on "Obeying the Inner Voice." He says that time after time he has felt a mystic impulse to visit a certain home or friend. This minister has never had reason to regret his habit of heeding the inner voice. But whenever, occasionally, he has failed to do so, he has soon become sorry. He insists that the Spirit is ready to speak if the minister is willing to listen. Should not the layman, also, learn to obey the inner voice? "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine."

Once more, the Holy Spirit prepares the heart of the person to be won. In the case before us the man is practically alone. He has both the time and the desire to talk about

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the things that matter most. He has been attending divine services and is reading his Bible. He is eager to have someone explain what a certain passage means. Who but the Spirit of God could arrange such a setting for personal evangelism?

Still further, the Holy Spirit brings these men together. Humanly speaking, there is not a chance in a million that the two will meet out in the open country where each is a stranger. But the Spirit works according to a plan of His own making. He watches over matters of time and place. He is far more concerned about the man who wishes to see the light, and the one who is waiting to show him the Saviour.

Lastly, the Spirit blesses what is done in His name. The inquirer accepts the Lord Jesus as personal Redeemer and asks to be baptized. Although the lay preacher has no ecclesiastical warrant, he gladly accedes to the unexpected request. Then the other man goes on his way homeward. His heart is singing praises to God.

Doubtless the new convert begins at once to do personal work with the driver of his chariot and the other servants in his retinue. Down in Ethiopia he will continue to be a winner of souls. How does one know? Because it is the nature of Christian experience to express itself in personal evangelism.

At the next midweek service one can take up the passage from a different point of view. The teaching here concerns how to do personal work. Begin with the other person where he is, mentally. Talk about what interests him at the moment. Since the Ethiopian is reading the Bible, this is the place to start the conversation: "Understandest thou what thou readest?"

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In dealing with the woman at the well the Lord Jesus began by speaking about water. That was what interested her most just then. As an Oriental she thought of water as a symbol of life. But out in the wilderness Philip does not begin with water. That is not yet in sight. He starts with the Book. It is at hand, inviting comment. The Lord Jesus would not have spoken to the woman about the prophecy of Isaiah. It was not part of her Samaritan Bible. Personal evangelism calls for discretion. If any man lack such practical wisdom, let him ask it of God. Tact comes through the Holy Spirit.

Whenever you can do so, use the Bible. Keep to a text that the other man knows and loves. As a rule it is better to rely on a single passage than to quote a succession of separate texts. The chosen words will mean all the more if the other man reads them from his Bible. Usually one has to locate the passage for him. Since there is no opportunity to consult a concordance, or a subject index, one should be able to repeat the golden text from memory, and then know where to find it at once. From this time forward the other man should use it as a guiding star for his soul.

If possible, answer the other man's questions about the Bible. At any rate, find out what he wishes to know. Be sure to listen! The temptation is to do all the talking. But the winner of souls who is wise encourages the other person to open up his heart, and then pays careful heed to all that he says. "Understandest thou what thou readest?" "How can I, except some man should guide me?" The personal worker is a guide along the pathway that leads to God. Before the interview starts, the guide himself should know the way.

Bring the other man face to face with the Christ of the

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Cross. He alone is the Saviour. Where the English version says, "Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus," the dominant verb means, literally, to evangelize, to tell the Good News. In the words from Isaiah the soul winner can see nothing else so clearly as the Crucified Redeemer. When the other man beholds the Suffering One, this is God's way of bringing redemption. Such is the New Testament mode of interpreting the Hebrew Bible. It shines in the radiance that streams from the Cross.

Aim at bringing about a definite decision for Christ. In some cases this is scarcely possible, but it is more likely to occur if one tries than if one does not. The appeal is to the will. There is a place for explanation. But there need not be much, and what there is need seldom be profound. There is more need of sympathy, born of experience, than of erudition, gained through reading books. In dealing with a practical man it is often the heart, not the head, that wins. But in the end it is the will that prevails. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

From a different point of view the incident shows the Christian attitude toward the strategic man. God wishes him to be saved. Of course the Lord desires us to win the man who is down and out. But we should not ignore the one who is high up in everything except the grace of God. For a well-known example of a strategic man saved by grace, mediated through another person, think about Saul of Tarsus, or Saint Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, as well as Kagawa of Japan, or General Chiang Kai Shek of China. On the other hand, why did not some layman years ago in South Africa strive to win Mahatma Gandhi when he was far from home and favorably disposed toward Christ?

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We have considered practical ways of using the Bible at the midweek service. The test of such a meeting comes at the close. Do the people tarry to enjoy Christian fellowship? Does one person after another come to the minister and ask for a word in private? "I want to do personal work this week. Please tell me where to begin."

If the time seems auspicious the pastor hands the friend a card showing the name and address of a person to be visited. Or the agreement may be to supply these facts by telephone the first thing in the morning. At the close of the service on the following Wednesday evening the worker should report to the minister the results of the call. Only the Lord needs to know what these two friends say about the person for whom they have been praying.

The Wednesday evening service may become the center of congregational evangelism. Why hold conferences about ways of injecting new life into the old prayer meeting, as though it needed some sort of patent serum? Why not give the service a reason for existence by putting into it the spirit of New Testament soul winning? In a church with the right sort of program and leadership the midweek meeting will not languish and die. Especially during the period between Christmas and Easter the dominant note should be concern for the souls of neighbors and friends.

Vastly more important than the way of conducting the meeting is the spirit that prevails. Perhaps we should have thought about this matter sooner, for the first half of the hour is more vital than the second. If the period for prayer and praise goes well, the time for discussion is sure to be effective. If the first half of the hour drags, so will the other part.

The meeting should all be one. The time given over to

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informal devotions should furnish the atmosphere for the readings from the Bible. These in turn should carry out the spirit of the prayers and hymns. The place where the people assemble should become a little sanctuary, a sort of Upper Room where the servants of God will receive the Holy Spirit.

For parish evangelism the power comes from God, in answer to prayer. When the minister knows how to lead, and the people are ready to follow, all are inclined to depend on themselves and their endeavors, instead of relying on God and His grace. Look out, and look up!

The rule of the fathers should hold: "Pray because everything depends on the Lord. Then work as though it all depended on you!" But do the praying first, and then work in the spirit of faith and hope. Such was the twofold purpose of John Wesley's class meetings. What have we now to take their place? Nothing so good as the midweek service!

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*The asterisk indicates a book in line with the preceding chapter.

CHAPTER VI

PERSONAL WORKERS

THE way to promote congregational evangelism is through pastoral leadership of personal workers. While the professional evangelist, such as Gipsy Smith, Jr., is worthy of praise, the pastoral evangelist of the right sort is more nearly ideal, and the lay worker under pastoral leadership should be the best of all. In the olden days the professional evangelist of the Moody type used to leave a blessing wherever he went. But the most thoughtful pastors discovered that when they did their work aright they did not need to import any professional leader.

The best service any minister can render, evangelistically, is to train personal workers, both men and women. Here again we face the old question, "How?" That depends on the minister and his parish. Methods differ, also, according to the time of year. But certain principles apply in general. First we shall think of those that concern the minister's leadership. Then we shall consider those that have to do with the selection and the training of the workers. In actual practice all these matters belong together. For convenience we shall take them up separately.

GUIDING THE WORKERS

Certain principles relate to the minister rather than the people. First of all, he should be a winner of souls. He should do perhaps two or three times as much personal work

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as any of his officers or members. The minister has more time, as well as a greater opportunity. Even if he delegates as many cases as possible he will have more than enough left to keep him busy. His enthusiasm for winning souls ought to be contagious. This is the heart of what one means by pastoral leadership of personal workers.

Again, the minister should have a growing list of people who are not professing Christians. If the congregation numbers three hundred active members residing in a district with more than a thousand adults, ideally he should have the names and addresses of the other seven hundred, with the facts about each one. In almost every parish at least twice as many adults are outside the fold as within. Still the pastor may be pining for a larger field of service. He may even be planning to become a professional evangelist. Meanwhile the Master is saying, "Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest."

The making of the prospect list calls for time and care. In fact, the labor never ceases. Through the leaders in the various organizations, especially the church school, the minister secures the name and address of every man or woman, boy or girl, for whose spiritual welfare the Lord holds the congregation responsible. If there is a church secretary or an assistant pastor some of the detail can be delegated. But the wise minister keeps in touch with every person whom he and his people wish to win for Christ.

At Dallas, for instance, George W. Truett has one of the largest congregations in America. There are more than seven thousand members. Although the senior pastor serves in countless ways far beyond the city and state, he is deeply concerned about the unsaved in Dallas. One day after he had preached about prayer he met a criminal lawyer who

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was noted for unbelief. The lawyer said, "I don't suppose you ever pray for a sinner like me!" The minister took out his notebook and pointed to a certain page. There was the name of the lawyer. The minister assured him that he had been on that daily prayer list for years.

On the other hand, a certain congregation in Ohio reported a few years ago 825 resident members. In October the minister and lay officers invited a pastor in a neighboring city to conduct special meetings for two weeks in January. He visited the field. At a dinner meeting he conferred with the minister and fifty or sixty of his leading workers. The visiting brother accepted their invitation on condition that they would pray and do personal work. They gladly agreed. He explained in detail how to make up lists of persons to be won, and how to approach them on behalf of Christ.

That night on the way home the brother was joyful. He supposed that he had shown the workers how to prepare for an ingathering. But three months later when he arrived for the first public meeting he found that they had the names of only twenty-eight persons whom they hoped to enlist for Christ. However, there were vague expectations of many more, whom the visiting brother was to attract out of the unknown. He was discouraged. If he had been pastor of a church with more than eight hundred members he would have thought, ideally, in terms of a prospect list running up toward a thousand. That would have been his harvest field.

The experience shows the weakness of our American ways. We try to do the work of the Lord wholesale. While we plead with God to save the city we ignore the neighbor or friend for whom the Saviour died. Then we

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expect someone from without to discover the people whom we have been neglecting. Perhaps we resort to a neighborhood or a city-wide canvass. As a rule that sort of thing looks better on paper than it appears in practice. After having entered heartily into a number of these canvasses the writer reluctantly concluded that it is better to depend on old-fashioned methods. The best fruit is hand-picked.

The minister and his people should know the parish as well as the ward politician and his henchmen know their district. In Jersey City under Mayor Hague every policeman on his beat is in touch with every person, especially among the men. From the autobiography of James A. Farley, *Behind the Ballots* (1938), the minister can learn how to show an interest in men. Farley has signed more letters by hand than any other person in public life. He knows that a written message is often more effective than a spoken word. But it must be a real letter, not something mimeographed and signed with a stencil. The home church should care for the individual.

Once more, the minister needs a number of personal workers. Ideally, every member of the home church should be a soul winner. Practically, a few men and women excel in such a ministry. If they were organized they would constitute a Gideon's band, though not so large. This idea comes from the inside cover of a "Gideon Bible" in a city hotel room:

Who are the Gideons? The seventh chapter of Judges shows the reason for adopting the name. Gideon was a man willing to do what God wanted him to do, irrespective of his own judgment as to plans or results, . . . a man ready to do God's will at any time, at any place, and in any way that the Spirit of God leads.

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Such an attitude is not confined to members of the Gideon Band. In Baltimore Don Frank Fenn tells of a man who was baptized and confirmed when he was about sixty years of age. Despite the fact that his education was limited, during the next five years he and his wife brought into the church ten persons, all adults. "The method was simple. He and his wife selected some couple who were not attending any church. They went after them and bragged about their parish church and rector, and concluded by inviting them to church." Sunday after Sunday the two workers kept this up, until at last the rector led their friends to Christ.

SELECTING THE WORKERS

While one is choosing the workers there is no publicity, no formal meeting, no call for volunteers. In fact, the workers choose themselves. They begin doing what their hearts most desire. When they tell their pastor, he bids them God-speed. There is no reason why anyone else should feel slighted because of not being asked to join the inner circle. There is no such little apostolic group. Rather is there a friendly understanding between the minister and each lay worker: they are to keep in touch with each other, because they are concerned about winning certain people out in the community.

The lay worker should be a first-class Christian: who loves people, individually; whom people love; who has winning ways of address; who is a Christian optimist; who is able to keep from divulging secrets—in short, one who is worthy to be a personal ambassador of God. But, alas, people of this kind are scarce, even among church officers and their wives. In a large congregation the minister is fortunate if he can rely upon a score, or even a dozen. Often

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he has to depend on still fewer. Some of them are by no means perfect. But "the Lord can strike a tremendous blow with a crooked stick."

The minister should keep in touch with each soul winner. This is especially needful during the harvest season. The method varies with the circumstances. For instance, when there is an opening for a call by a layman, the minister decides whom to send. When once a layman receives an assignment he is in charge until he is released. The wise leader never interferes with what one of his associates is doing. However, the pastor is eager to help or advise whenever he is asked. If the worker succeeds, the minister expresses his gratitude, and calls on the new convert immediately to arrange about his joining the church, perhaps by way of the instruction class.

The spirit is that of teamwork. In every team there are two persons, of whom one is the minister. There is no giving or receiving of orders. Everything is on the basis of Christian friendship. As the weeks go by, a worker here and another there drop out. Excuses vary, but the reason often is that personal work affords no opportunity to stand in the spotlight. Another person, from whom the minister expects little, may prove to be a power. Often those who seem least promising are the most useful.

The plan calls for sending out the workers one by one. There is much to be said for the apostolic custom of sending them two by two. But that was for preaching, not personal work. The present writer was glad when he could secure one capable worker for each prospect. With twelve or twenty workers, there were at any time more than that many persons to be visited. The caller can take a deep interest in only one prospect at a time. Since the interviews may ex-

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tend over a number of days, or weeks, it is simpler if one person does the calling. Then too it is easier to start the other person talking when there is only a single listener.

However, there are exceptions. In a certain home the conditions may call for a visit by two persons. When a young father and mother are becoming concerned about the little children, there may be a friendly call by a young husband and wife who are rearing their little ones to love the Lord and His church. Apart from the opportunity with boys and girls in the Bible school, the most fruitful field for personal work may be among young married folk. Wise is the minister who appreciates the importance of winning them for Christ.

Sometimes the parents in view are no longer young. In his book, *Being Made Over* (1939), Charles R. Brown of Yale tells about a woman who had been married fourteen years. There were two children. Accidentally she discovered that her husband was planning to go away with a stenographer who worked in the same office. At the end of the month they expected to start living together in another city. Not knowing where else to turn, she confided in a neighboring pastor, to whom she had been a stranger. At the moment he could not suggest any course of action, but he promised to help her. When she was leaving he asked her to do nothing but pray.

After she had gone home the minister prayed, more than seven times. At last he saw the light. It came from God. The plan was simple. Without explaining why, he asked five Christian men to go with their wives and call on these unchurched folk, being specially careful to show concern about the children. The first call was to be on the next Monday evening, the second on Tuesday, and so on until

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Friday. With each pair of visitors the spirit of Christian friendliness was sincere. Doubtless the wife in the home could discern what the minister had done. But she possessed her soul in patience. Meanwhile she was learning to pray.

Before the end of the week the husband had come to himself. Hitherto he had never been a bad man. He broke off relations with the stenographer and determined to do all he could to right the wrong. On Saturday evening he confessed to his wife what he had planned to do, and begged her to forgive him. When she did so, completely, he asked her to go with him the next morning to some church, which she was to name. She suggested that they attend where all those evening visitors belonged. She knew that the Spirit of God would speak through her new friend, the minister with the shepherd heart.

All of this may seem too good to be true, but it took place. Is anything too good for God to do? While Dean Brown does not carry the record beyond that Sunday morning, one feels sure that with such a pastor and lay workers it would not be long before that father and mother found their way into the fellowship of the church. With them would come their children. This narrative throws a flood of light on the meaning of pastoral evangelism. It calls for Christian nurture as well as soul winning. Nothing human is foreign to the shepherd of souls.

Lastly, the minister should enjoy such teamwork with his lay friends. There is joy in the heart of a shepherd when he finds the sheep that has been lost. There is more joy in the heart of the physician when he rescues a friend who has been close to death. How much higher and holier joy should there be in the hearts of pastor and layman who have worked

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together in leading a soul out into the sunlight of the Father's love! The pastor ascribes the credit, under God, chiefly to the layman. He in turn would be at a loss without the help of the minister. With each of them the joy is all the richer because it is shared with a friend.

TRAINING THE WORKERS

The training of the workers is largely indirect. They learn best by doing. Nevertheless, there are certain facts which the minister should teach them gradually. Partly through sermons, more through Bible readings at the mid-week service, most by personal conversation, he should help them to see that individual evangelism is the normal expression of a person's faith in Christ. One way to stress this fact is to show that in some foreign fields each new convert proves that he is a Christian by going out and bringing someone else to the Lord. Such was the spirit of evangelism in the early Church.

Again, the pastor should prepare the workers to meet different sorts of unbelief. If he is schooled in psychology he may be tempted to employ technical terms. Without doing so, he should make it clear that two cases of unbelief are never exactly alike. One man, such as the Philippian jailer, wishes to be saved, but does not know how. For the personal worker this "prospect" is almost ideal. Another man, like Nicodemus, is interested, but he has intellectual difficulties. This person is often thoughtful. His perplexities may be so baffling that the minister himself should handle the case.

The same is true of the honest doubter. Whereas Nicodemus is an inquirer, seeking the light, many another strong man, like Thomas, refuses to accept the light when it is

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shining full in his face. Doubt may or may not be due to secret sin. Doubt is mental uncertainty concerning the basic truths of the Christian faith. Whatever the cause, and the form it assumes, doubt is a disorder of the soul, and requires skillful treatment. Fortunate is the pastor who can

minister to a mind diseased,
Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow,
Raze out the written troubles of the brain
And with some sweet oblivious antidote
Cleanse the stuff'd bosom of that perilous stuff
Which weighs upon the heart.

The situation is still more difficult when the person does not wish to be saved. Until there is such a desire one cannot hope to win a man for Christ. Among all the internal forces that lead a man Godward, the strongest on the human level is "the will to believe." When a man is determined to be saved, he is sure to learn how. If he is not inclined to seek the Lord, and secure pardon for sin, the worker needs to awaken and foster the desire. Here again the minister should reserve the case for his own hands.

Most difficult of all, even for the experienced pastor, is the case where a man has publicly taken his stand against Christ and the Church. Little easier is the task of winning the one who has previously confessed his faith and then has fallen away. He may wonder if religion for others is as empty as it has proved with him. Still another puzzling case is that of the man like young Augustine, who wishes to be saved, but not now.

One could write a book about the varieties of unbelief, and the difficulties of winning unchurched folk. When ministers get together on a blue Monday morning they sometimes read papers about these obstacles and try to devise

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ways of surmounting them. But the most ingenious theories seldom work in the parish. As in the practice of medicine, one rarely encounters a "textbook case." What matters is that the minister know how to diagnose the various disorders of the soul. Then he can turn over to his lay friends such cases as they can deal with adequately. In actual life, however, these abnormal cases are less frequent than one might suppose after reading the books about diseases of the soul.

It is more vital that the worker know how to approach the person who is normal. In the average community nine cases out of ten present no serious complications. What the person requires is the sympathy and helpfulness of a friend or acquaintance who will talk things over and pray until the light breaks forth.

While it may not be soothing to the parson's vanity, the best treatment often comes from a layman. If the person in view is a young woman or girl, the ideal worker is a good woman with charm and tact. The chief business of the minister may be to decide whom to put in charge. After that, hands off!

In training personal evangelists the emphasis should usually be positive. Negations would quickly chill the layman's ardor. This is the substance of what one minister tells his workers:

Remember that soul winning is a matter of individual work with the individual. Before you go out to see a man, pray for him. Think about him, too, and figure out the natural way of bringing him face to face with the Lord Jesus. Arrange to see the other man when no one else is present. Call at an hour when he is free to talk and think. In short, pray and plan.

During the call be natural. Be friendly. Use tact. Before many minutes have passed, explain your mission, openly. When you show concern for a man's soul you are paying him a tribute. Keep his at-

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tention fixed on Christ, not yourself. If the other man knows his Bible, use a familiar verse. Repeat it often, at intervals, so that he will remember it word for word. It is better to use one verse or two than to quote many different passages. Focus his attention. Do not scatter. If you can, get him to pray. When he accepts Christ, explain what is needful in joining our church. Then report to the pastor.

The worker should likewise know how not to approach a person. Listen again to the pastoral guide:

It is a mistake to apologize. When you engage in personal work you represent your King. In His name you have a right to be heard. But be tactful.

It is unwise to talk in terms of salesmanship. You are not trying to sell something that money can buy. Salvation is free. It calls for a personal experience of God's redeeming grace, and a life of devotion to the Lord Jesus. Partly for this reason it is unwise to do much talking. Give the other person an opportunity to think. If he says little, he may be listening to God.

It is foolish to argue. High-pressure methods defeat themselves. It is wrong to get angry. If you cannot control your temper, stay at home and saw wood. It is wrong, also, to compromise with conscience. Sin is sin. The man whom Christ saves is so ashamed and sorry for his past that he repents and confesses to God. It is a grievous error to suggest that an unconverted person confess faith in Christ, or that a member of another church become a proselyte. The Kingdom will never come in a community where the churches steal sheep.

It is useless to work in the spirit of gloom. Faith, love, and hope are contagious. So are doubt, coldness, and despair. When you go out to intercede for Christ, be at your best. Look and act like a Christian! Be radiant! While it may not be sinful to get blue, never engage in soul winning when your heart is not singing.

Remember that results appear slowly at times. In some cases you will not succeed. The Lord Himself did not win the rich young ruler, and many another. While the Master did prevail with Nicodemus, the victory came a long while after the first meeting. The person who is hardest to win often means most to the cause.

It is unwholesome to think much about the obstacles, and your own limitations. Lift up your heart, and trust in the Lord. It is

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wrong not to try, and keep on trying. The worst mistake is to trust in yourself, not the Spirit of God. Learn to pray and work.

Form the habit of engaging in religious conversation. Whenever you find that a man is not a Christian and a member of the church, pray for him. Then speak to him about Christ. If your faith falters, keep saying to yourself: "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help." Towering above those hills behold the Cross.

A devotional book approved by the bishops of the Protestant Episcopal Church, *His Cross and Ours* (1941), by Joseph Fort Newton, tells of a pastoral counsellor who has the mind of the Lord. When a woman came to this friend for help he asked her, "What do you see in life?" She replied, "I suppose that I see what everyone else sees—a question mark written large across the horizon." Then the wise man said, "Don't see a question mark; see a Cross!" In the same book the motto is from Madame Guyon: "God gives us the Cross, and the Cross gives us God."

We have considered the pastor's leadership of personal workers, and his methods of training them for the winning of souls. If we glance back we shall see that such evangelism affords a test of the minister's ability to plan his work as well as lead others. There is likewise a test of his own experience as a lover of God and fellow men.

If the pastor is worthy, these labors will be more and more fruitful. The fruit, however, will appear in the church. It is the vine. "He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing." Fruit, more fruit, much fruit! All of it is from the Indwelling Christ.

The right sort of leadership among the people of God enables the minister to multiply his usefulness, and make it permanent. By training the congregation as a whole, and by

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singling out a few of his friends for service they are specially qualified to render, he can promote evangelism throughout the year, especially during the harvest season. Laboring together, under God, he and his associates can present the claims of Christ and the Kingdom to every man or woman, boy or girl, who ought to become a Christian and unite with the church.

At the same time the pastoral evangelist is able to watch over the sheep already within the fold. He can enlist and lead chosen workers in caring for the new converts, and help them grow in knowledge and grace. All of this is a beautiful theory. It is likewise a matter of experience. In parishes more than a few, both small and large, the plan has worked, and is working today. Why should there not be in every congregation a minister sent from God to labor as the winner and shepherd of souls?

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CHAPTER VII

SPECIAL SERVICES

IS IT wise to hold special meetings in the parish church? The answers differ widely. One pastoral evangelist, notably successful, conducts special services in the home church every year at the same season. Another, equally effective, never has such meetings. The wise plan may be to have no set rule, but to hold such services when there is a clear call from the Lord. One writer, Don Frank Fenn, says that it is not good to plan for a "mission" oftener than once in five years. In this whole matter it is well to keep an open mind.

During the past few decades the trend has been away from the custom of having a "big meeting" every year. When Frederick E. Taylor wrote *The Evangelistic Church* he had been pastor of a large congregation twenty-one years. During that period he had invited only two ministers from without to hold special services, and only one of the two series was evangelistic. The pastor himself had conducted meetings at home only five or six times, and seldom in successive years. The pastor of this kind depends on "the constant spirit of evangelism." However, when there is a call for special services he is ready to lead.

PREPARING FOR THE SERVICES

Opinions differ concerning the best season of the year. In a rural parish the most suitable time may be late in summer,

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after the harvest and before the fall plowing. In the city a better season may be early in January. In recent years the favorite time has been just before Easter. This plan allows six months for preparation after the work opens anew in the fall. Even so, the week beginning with Palm Sunday is scarcely long enough for an effective "preaching mission."

In all these matters relating to times and seasons the wise minister defers to local customs and expectations. When he holds a series of special meetings he wishes to make them count for the Kingdom.

In his book, *The Man of God* (1935), Canon Green of Manchester insists that the lowest limit for an effective "mission" is fifteen days, beginning and ending with a Sunday. In our country most writers think in terms of eight days, including two Sundays. That is the suggestion of Don Frank Fenn in his book, *Church Administration* (1938). In another helpful work, *Ancient Fires on Modern Altars* (1931), by Bishop Adna W. Leonard of The Methodist Church, the proposal is much the same. But Bishop Leonard advocates intensive evangelistic effort before and after the "preaching mission."

One way to prepare for public services is to hold cottage meetings simultaneously for a week or two before the people begin to assemble in the sanctuary. Even if they have been thinking and praying about evangelism for months, and likewise engaging in personal work, there is a distinct advantage in holding cottage meetings. If they are properly arranged for and carried out they do much to warm the hearts of God's people and prepare them for the public meetings soon to commence. However, it is not easy to arrange for cottage meetings and see that the plans are followed effectively.

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The idea is to divide the parish into districts, geographically. Each of them has a lay convener, who may or may not reside in the neighborhood. During the meetings this layman is a sort of district overseer. His local group may comprise fifty members of the home church, who live within walking distance of one another. For each cottage meeting there should be a different home, and a different leader, preferably a man. Prayerfully and skillfully this leader should arrange for the meeting. While the gathering should be a sort of family reunion, even that requires a good deal of quiet planning.

As an object lesson take a certain congregation with three hundred members. One year during the two weeks before Palm Sunday there were six cottage meetings on each Monday and six on Friday. In preparing for these gatherings on any evening the six leaders conferred briefly with the pastor. While every leader was supposed to conduct the meeting in his own fashion, the minister outlined a general program. It included a number of songs and prayers, a passage of scripture, a subject, and a few suggestions about the leader's remarks. The idea was for him to encourage group discussion on the chosen aspect of prayer and soul winning.

These suggestions from the minister were simple and informal. They were not in writing, and were not mandatory. But he had planned so carefully, on the basis of his past experiences, and he presented his ideas so tactfully, that most of the leaders followed his suggestions. Consequently all the gatherings on any evening tended to be alike. From meeting to meeting there was progress. As the people drew near to the public services, there was a growing spirit of expectancy.

The minister did not attend any meeting. But he dropped

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in at the beginning or the end of one gathering in each district. He wished the lay leaders to know that he trusted them, and that he was pleased with their work. He found that all the meetings went well. The attendance averaged from twenty to twenty-five; that is, forty to fifty per cent of the members available. This attendance was due in part to the hostess. By telephone or otherwise she invited everyone in her district. She did her best to make those who attended feel at home. However, she did not serve refreshments. Eating and evangelism do not mix.

During the two weeks there were twenty-four cottage meetings. Out of three hundred members one in six took some active part in making ready for the gatherings. As in running a town newspaper, the idea was to have every household feel concerned about the meetings, and do its share in the work of making ready. When the two weeks had gone by, the members of the home church were so enthusiastic about their cottage meetings, and so concerned about winning the unsaved and unchurched, that everyone felt the time had come to assemble in the House of God.

As for the special services, the main question is, who shall do the preaching? If the time for the meetings is just before Easter it may be difficult to secure a leader from elsewhere. Months in advance, every evangelist, pastor, or song leader who excels in such work is likely to be engaged for this period. Unless the leader from without is sure to prove worthy, it may be better not to hold meetings than to have an uncertain hand at the helm. In a single week the wrong sort of leader can cause confusion and discord. Why run the risk?

The best man to lead is the pastor. He knows the field and its needs. He is in vital touch with the workers and has had

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much to do with making the plans. His heart is burning with zeal for the salvation of the sinner and the reclaiming of the unchurched. He has been praying for them, and speaking to them, one after another, about accepting Christ. Since the pastor is to lead them into the membership of the church, and then build them up in faith, he is the logical man to preach throughout the special services. If he is not available the next best plan may be to secure a neighboring minister whom the people in his own congregation love and trust.

The home pastor hesitates about doing the preaching. Seldom will he volunteer. But the officers can draft him into service. They know him and his ways. They trust him. They love to hear him preach and pray. They would rather have him than anyone else. If he holds back, the senior elder or deacon should tell him what Dwight L. Moody once said to a minister who was reluctant to lead in a special mission: "My brother, if you cannot preach the Gospel whenever God opens the way, you have missed your calling." The pastor will yield, and trust God to bless all that he says in his special sermons.

Why should the call for a series of evangelistic messages find the man of God unprepared? After the first year or two in the active ministry why should a man's storehouse of soul-winning sermons be as bare as Mother Hubbard's cupboard? When a young minister leaves the divinity school he knows that sooner or later he will have an opportunity to preach the Gospel night after night in a series of evangelistic meetings. Before the time draws near he should have in mind a number of sermons that will bring every hearer face to face with Christ the Redeemer.

There should likewise be careful provision for the music. A chorus choir is better than a quartet. If the members of

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the choir attend all the services and lead the singing with joyous abandon, this fact will go far to make the meetings a success. Each evening when the time comes for the sermon they can file down from the choir loft and take their places in the pews. But after the meetings get well under way there may not be room for the choir to sit among the other people. As with the cottage meetings, the idea is to enlist for active service as many people as possible among the households of the congregation.

There need not be much special music. What there is should be simple and inspiring. But there should be a good deal of singing by the people. For spirited leadership of the choir and the congregation some local singer is often best, provided his heart is in the work of winning souls. He knows that the people who attend special meetings love to sing the old hymns about Christ and the Cross. Among them are "Jesus, Lover of My Soul" and "Rock of Ages." According to many, the best of all our evangelistic songs is:

Just as I am, without one plea,
But that Thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bidd'st me come to Thee,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come!

Almost equally important is the ushering. The leader of the music and the head usher ought to be the right and the left hand of the minister who conducts special services. The head usher chooses his assistants with care. They should include some of the leading men of the church, all of whom should take their duties seriously. Night after night they should be present fifteen or twenty minutes before the hour, and see that everything is in place. At the door they should greet everyone who enters, and with a

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smile hand each person a copy of the songbook, as well as lead the way to the proper pew.

The ushers can do a vast deal to make the meetings attractive to members of the church and to people in the community. Ushers know how to make everyone comfortable, and how to prevent distractions. Whatever the minister's plan for "drawing the net," the effectiveness on the human side may depend a good deal on the skill and tact of the ushers. They will respond to the right sort of leadership on the part of the minister, especially if he has cultivated the fine art of appreciation. He will thank God for this band of busy men whose hearts God has touched.

While the minister is arranging for his part of the work the officers should be getting the sanctuary in order. In a practical "Campaign Guide and Handbook," *New Testament Evangelism* (1941), a leader among the Disciples of Christ, C. J. Sharp, stresses the importance of all these preparations, not only because they are essential to the success of the movement, but because they foster the spirit of expectancy. Those in charge of the sanctuary should make it ready for the meetings as carefully as a housemother prepares for an approaching wedding ceremony, with a large reception immediately after. Whatever we do for God, we should do well.

The trustees should "clean and furbish the grounds." There should be abundance of free space for parking, and provision for an overflow within the sanctuary. If extra chairs are to be needed, they should be ready in advance. There should also be a songbook for each person. While popular, these books should not be trashy. Many of them should be new, and all of them attractive to the eye. If the lighting system is not first-class it should be overhauled.

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People today are accustomed to abundance of light after dark. In short, when the meetings begin, everything should be ready. This is the best sort of advertising. It shows that the home church means business.

There should also be other publicity. Much of it goes out through the community from neighbor to neighbor until everyone knows that the coming meetings are to be the best that the home church has ever had. It is also wise to use printer's ink. Everyone should know exactly when the meetings are to begin, and feel that he is welcome. The advertising need not be expensive, and it should never be gaudy. But there should be a good deal of it, and all that there is should be as worthy in substance and form as the printed matter that goes out from a bank or business house.

The publicity should vary according to the amount of money available. The weekly bulletin or parish paper lends itself to such uses. Throughout the winter there may be short paragraphs about evangelism. These items call for the use of facts. As the meetings draw near there is need for a folder or card of invitation. Such printed matter should be neat and attractive. The copy should be carefully prepared, and the proofs read several times. The important facts should stand out. They are more likely to do so if the space is not crowded. Some of these cards should go through the mail, others from hand to hand.

Do we church folk make sufficient use of the mail? Not if we send out letters only when we are begging for money! It is a safe rule to put down in black and white anything that the layman should preserve, and nothing else. There is a worthy place for the evangelistic letter that goes to every member of the congregation. This message should be carefully prepared, and neatly printed or mimeographed.

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It should be signed by the minister. Since it goes out in the name of the King, to promote the greatest work in the world, each letter should carry first-class postage.

These preparations involve the outlay of money. This is one reason for having special services only once in a while, and then making them seem momentous. The neighboring minister said to a certain brother after his meetings had ended, "You people do not hold special services often, but when you have them you make them shine!" If the meetings are a success spiritually, there is no difficulty about securing the money. The people give gladly. But there should be some businesslike way to providing for it without much ado.

If the annual budget does not carry such a provision, there may be a special offering near the close of the meetings. Whatever the method, there should be no pressure, and no embarrassment for the visiting minister or song leader. He never enjoys hearing about how much it costs to secure his services. Neither should there be any soliciting of advertising from the neighborhood butcher. In trying to raise money that the members should contribute, the church may forfeit the esteem of the businessman it is striving to attract.

Vastly more important than all these matters combined is the preparation in the hearts of pastor and people. For such culture of soul there are no rules and devices, subject to patent and copyright. Under God, the reliance should be on the old-fashioned means of grace, both at home and in church. If the minister and his people live in the spirit of prayer, feed their souls from the Book, enjoy public worship in the sanctuary, and keep their spiritual muscles strong by doing Christian work, their souls will be in good health.

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Such people are ready for a season of ingathering, it may be through special services.

CONDUCTING THE MEETINGS

Throughout the meetings the purpose is evangelistic. The aim is to win souls, one after another. Since the period for the meetings is short, the "deepening of the spiritual life" should give place to evangelism. As at Pentecost, the work of evangelism calls for emphasis on prayer, on preaching, and on personal work—all at the same time, and in the spirit of faith, as well as joyous expectation. In prayer, in preaching, and in personal work the aim is to bring each unsaved person face to face with the Son of God. He alone can redeem.

In every meeting the spirit should be that of worship. Without being slovenly it may be informal. If the people are accustomed to a liturgy, there may be a good deal of ceremony. This is the counsel of Bishop Adna W. Leonard, who seems to have initiated the idea of the Preaching Mission. The plan is better than the name. Why not think of a Praying Mission and a Singing Mission? These parts of the worship often receive too little attention from the minister in charge. He should be as well prepared to pray as to preach. He should select the hymns with loving care. In order to do that he must have a plan for the service as a whole.

Whether formal or not, the meetings should be in the main sanctuary. This fact will indicate that the services are as vital as those on Sunday mornings. Indeed, the special meetings should be on a still higher plane. Everyone should be present the first evening, and throughout the series. On the other hand, if the leaders arranged for meetings in some other room they would be showing lack of confidence in the

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people. Wise leaders expect God's children to do their duty. If they fail, the leaders may be at fault.

PREACHING THE GOSPEL

As for the preaching, every sermon ought to glow. It should be a burning message from the heart of God to the man in the pew. The sermons as a whole, at least within any week, ought to form a series. Each part should lead up to the next, and all should move toward a climax. This is one reason why the preaching throughout should be by the same minister. If there were a succession of preachers, however worthy, the human element might be more in evidence than the divine. But when the same man speaks from night to night he can lead the hearer further and further into the mountain country of the King.

The nature of the series depends in part on what the minister has been doing the past few months. If he plans his pulpit work by the year, he has been following the life of Christ, starting with Christmas, or the Advent Season. If the special meetings come between Palm Sunday and Easter, what he has been doing may call for a series about "The Drama of the Cross." As at Oberammergau, the action may start with the Triumphal Entry, and have to do with Christ as King, as well as Saviour. Beginning with Palm Sunday, the series may close on Good Friday. In the list below, however, we shall include Easter. On the printed card the texts would not appear.

A.M.:	The King of Our City.....	Matt. 21:9 <i>b</i>
P.M.:	The King on His Throne.....	Matt. 25:31
Mon.:	The King on His Cross.....	John 19:19 <i>b</i>
Tu.:	The Shame of the Cross.....	Luke 23:33
Wed.:	The Healing of the Cross.....	John 3:14, 15
Th.:	The Magnetism of the Cross.....	John 12:32

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Fri.:	The Glory of the Cross.....	Gal. 6:14
A.M.:	The Commencement Day of Christ....	Matt. 28:5, 6
P.M.:	The Afterglow of Easter Day.....	Luke 24:32

On the cross the Son of God comes face to face with sinful men, one after another. To every person who accepts Him as Saviour He gives power to become an heir of God. Beholding His glory as He is willing to die, the man in the pew should find in Him pardon, cleansing, and peace. But the interpreter may turn aside to stress the human actors in the drama: Judas and Peter, Pilate and Herod, the Beloved Disciple and the Mother of Jesus. Any one of them would suggest a sermon full of human interest. But all of those persons together, and a host of others like them, would be powerless to redeem. "Sir, we would see Jesus!"

Another series is on "The Voice from the Cross." The texts are the "Seven Words" from the Dying Redeemer. Before one starts active work on the series one can read *The Trial and Death of Jesus Christ*, by James Stalker; *The Day of the Cross*, by W. M. Clow; *His Cross and Ours* (1941), by Joseph Fort Newton; or *In the Shadow of the Cross* (1941), by Frederick K. Stamm. Better still, one can live in the latter part of each Gospel until one senses the inner meaning of Calvary. This is the sort of series about which one ought to read and think, pray and dream, for a year or so in advance. How else can one speak about the Cross seven times in succession?

None of the seven sayings is easy to use as the basis of a Christ-centered sermon. The fourth and the sixth are so baffling that one is tempted to pass them by. Even so, there would be texts for five sermons, beginning on Monday evening and closing on Friday. But any minister who preaches from all seven will find each of them fruitful in a

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different way. One need not attempt to explain any such saying in full. Rather should one "preach suggestively, not exhaustively." The idea is to keep the King on His Cross at the center of each sermon, and then let Him speak to the heart of the hearer. In the following series the first message is for Palm Sunday.

A.M.:	The Forgiveness of Wrongs.....	Luke 23:34a
P.M.:	The Forgiveness of Sins.....	Luke 23:43
Mon.:	The Kindness of the Cross.....	John 19:26b
Tu.:	The Mystery of the Cross.....	Matt. 27:46
Wed.:	The Sufferings of the Cross.....	John 19:28
Th.:	The Finality of the Cross.....	John 19:30a
Fri.:	The Triumph of the Cross.....	Luke 23:46a

Another series is on "The Meaning of a Man's Religion." This calls for something more extensive than either of the lists thus far. In the topics below, the first five are for the week before Palm Sunday. The others are for the evenings after. All ten, however, belong in one series. If there are to be only five sermons, the group starting with Christ and ending with the Church would be the better. The heart of our religion is here. In each sermon the aim is to win the soul, not to interpret the passage. These texts and topics are only suggestions. Every man should work out his own homiletics.

Mon.:	Man as God's Child.....	Luke 15:17
Tu.:	Sin as a Fact Today.....	Luke 15:18, 19
Wed.:	God as Man's Father.....	Luke 15:21
Th.:	Forgiveness as an Experience.....	Luke 15:22-24
Fri.:	Man's Final Examination Day.....	II Cor. 5:10
Mon.:	Who Is Jesus Christ?.....	John 14:9
Tu.:	What It Means to Be a Christian.....	II Cor. 5:17
Wed.:	How to Become a Christian.....	Acts 16:31
Th.:	What It Means to Be Saved.....	Eph. 2:8
Fri.:	Why Join the Church?.....	Matt. 16:18

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DRAWING THE NET

At the close of any such sermon how should one draw the net? This question comes up in every ministerial conference about soul winning. Unfortunately, no way of securing public confessions is ideal. Perhaps the best plan is to follow the most worthy custom in one's denomination and parish. If two preceding ministers have used different methods, the senior officer can tell which way seems best to the most thoughtful laymen.

The practice locally may be to have no way of drawing the net in public, except occasionally near the close of a special series. The writer never drew the net at all. The traditions did not point in that direction. Neither did his inclinations.

Where parish custom warrants, there is much to be said for the plan of having the inquirers come forward and kneel at the altar. This is what one expects during special services in many a Methodist sanctuary. The posture has a symbolic meaning, especially if the friends come forward while everyone is singing:

Just as I am! Thy love unknown
Hath broken every barrier down.

At another church it may be better to have the friends come forward and remain standing while they receive the right hand of welcome from the pastor and officers in the name of Christ. If so, it should be clear that the friends may be inquirers, not converts. How can they confess Christ as King before they have found Him as Saviour? Without going to the extremes that used to attend "the mourners' bench," many inquirers today need special attention before

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they are ready to receive the right hand of fellowship as members of the church.

A third method is common. It has slight value as symbolism, and makes little demand on the will. The idea is to have each inquirer sign a card. It may already be in the pew, or else be handed out by an usher. Still another method, even easier for the person in mind, is to have all the people bow in prayer, and then ask each inquirer to raise the right hand. Usually this leads to the signing of a card. The objection is that everything seems easy. The Master stresses the difficulty: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me."

Any plan calls for skill and tact, as well as grace and common sense, on the part of the leader. Even so, many good folk look askance at such procedures. They seem to smack of American revivalism. It may be wise, therefore, to hold an after-meeting. The name is not ideal. It sounds like an "afterthought," or an "anticlimax." But the plan itself is worthy. In the proper hands it is practically free from flaws. For one thing, it is flexible.

During the announcements, and again near the close of the sermon, one makes it clear that the minister and officers will be in the room adjoining the study, immediately after the benediction, and that they invite to meet with them everyone who wishes to talk with a friend about becoming a Christian. Whenever one makes such a promise, one should keep the appointment. So should the officers. Otherwise it is better not to say anything about an after-meeting.

What occurs depends on the number who present themselves, and on other factors that no one can foresee. There may be a short service, consisting chiefly of prayer. Then the minister or one of the laymen talks privately with each

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person who has come in. It may seem best to arrange for an interview with the pastor on the morrow, perhaps in the same place. As recent discussions of casework evangelism have reminded us afresh, ministering to the soul that is weary of worldliness and sin calls for time and patience, in the spirit of prayer and expectation.

Many who come to the after-meeting require no special attention. Every one of them has talked matters over more than once with a Christian worker, and perhaps with the minister. Now the desire is to take a public stand for Christ. In dealing with such a group the leaders of the church should strive to make the occasion seem momentous. The spirit they wish to foster is that of the hymn by Philip Doddridge:

O happy day, that fixed my choice
On Thee, my Saviour and my God!

While neither words nor tune belong on the higher levels of sacred music, the following lines express the joys of the new believer:

'Tis done: the great transaction's done!
I am my Lord's, and He is mine;
He drew me and I followed on,
Charmed to confess the Voice divine.

At the close of a special evening service in Houston, Texas, the writer was present when the minister and officers welcomed friends who were uniting with the church. The visitor wished that he and his household might have been received into that fellowship, and that they might cherish through the years the recollection of those fifteen minutes in the Upper Room. On the other hand, he has been present on such occasions when the atmosphere was like that of a

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marriage-license bureau near the time for closing the doors. Let us learn to cherish the beauty of symbolism!

Under present conditions the question is not how to deal with those who tarry for the after-meeting, but how to get people out at seven-thirty or eight o'clock. Those who are absent cannot respond to any way of drawing the net. This problem goes back to the need for personal workers. When a Christian man or woman leads a friend or neighbor to Christ, the soul winner can bring the new convert to church. At the end of the service he is ready to kneel or stand, sign a card or attend the after-meeting. He wishes to confess Christ, and does not ask to be baptized out behind the barn.

It is rarely difficult to persuade a real convert to unite with the church. He knows what the Saviour has done for him. When he comes to the sanctuary he is not likely to leave before the ushers secure his name and address. They should already have this information clearly in mind. Better still, they should count him as one of their new friends in the Lord. When a man knows that he has been born again, he longs for Christian fellowship and nurture, all in the spirit of brotherly love.

The difficulty is that we may induce an unconverted person to confess his faith and unite with the church. As in the days of revivalism, there is a tendency to rush a sheer pagan into the ranks of professing Christians. The zeal of pastor and laymen may lead to the admission of persons with no saving experience of redeeming love. When once an unconverted man makes a public profession, it is difficult to do much for him. He feels that he has tried religion and found it vain. Without knowing the facts numerically, one fears that our churches are full of unconverted folk.

When the writer was new in the work he had an experi-

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ence that taught him caution. At a midweek service he learned that a certain woman who was present wished to unite with the church. At the request of his friends he would have assembled the officers and they might have received her into the fold. But during the meeting she fell asleep in what proved to be a drunken stupor. She had to be carried into the pastor's study. There she revived sufficiently to be escorted home. In a day or so the minister learned that she was living in adultery, and that she was not repentant.

During the next few months he tried to win her for Christ, but he failed. Less than a year after she had tried to unite with the church he officiated at her funeral. Partly because of this experience he determined that he would deal personally with every candidate for church membership. He should also have held an instruction class. While the numerical results of such a plan may not be so large as when one works wholesale, the shrinkage is smaller. In short, "joining the church" is often a farce.

The rule is to welcome into the family of the redeemed every person who gives evidence of being a Christian, and no one else. It is difficult to go further into detail. In different branches of the Protestant church the ways of receiving and training new members vary widely. The reference here is only to those who come on confession of faith. Many of them receive adult baptism. Whatever may precede that august ceremony, it should be the visible sign of inward grace wrought by the Spirit of God through the atoning death of Jesus Christ.

What many a congregation needs just now is the sort of pastoral evangelist who appreciates the importance of preparing each candidate for church membership. There is

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usually something of the kind with growing boys and girls. While the pastor's class may not be perfect, the basic idea is excellent. Out in Wisconsin a young minister likewise holds such a class for adults on four successive Wednesday evenings prior to each communion. Before any man or woman is publicly received into that congregation it is necessary to attend the class. Consequently membership in the church has come to be more than a matter of form.

When a person has made a public profession of faith and has united with the church the ministry of the pastor has only begun. In the life of the believer, as in the growth of a fruit tree, it is the privilege of some person to arrange conditions so that the tender plant will thrive. "Only God can make a tree," or save a soul. But in each case He loves to work through one or more of His servants and friends. In the nurture of the soul that has been born anew, the chief agent of God is the pastor.

As we glance back we conclude that every minister should prepare for leadership in a series of meetings. It may be a number of years before the call of duty comes, but when it does he should respond without worry or hurry or fear. What else does it mean to be a pastoral evangelist?

SUGGESTED READINGS

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*The asterisk indicates a book in line with the preceding chapter.

CHAPTER VIII

PARISH REVIVAL

HOW can we have a revival without suffering from the aftermath of revivalism?" The answer here is, through congregational evangelism. Thus far we have been thinking about ways and means, as well as results with respect to converts. Now let us consider the effect on the congregation. Any such program, conceived in prayer and carried out in faith, will result in the quickening of God's people, and the strengthening of the home church. The influence should also extend far beyond.

The same line of thought holds true with regard to missions abroad. Apart from geography and language, what is the distinction between evangelism in Middletown and missions in Elat? The church that is enthusiastic about one cause will be zealous for the other. People who love God are deeply concerned about what is close to His heart. He would have all men to be saved, both here and across the sea. In a congregation with such a practical philosophy there should be a revival. If so, it will come best through evangelism.

There is another well-known way of trying to revive the church. Pastor and laymen alike feel unworthy to present the claims of Christ throughout the community. They devise schemes for deepening their own spiritual lives. The ideal is admirable. What congregation does not need to live on a higher level? Often the endeavor issues in failure.

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Then the spiritual leaders of the flock resort to still other expedients. If they reviewed the history of the Church they would discover that the best way to keep the church well and strong is through evangelism. God takes care of those who do His work in His way.

The dominant motive in evangelism is altruistic, but the reflex influence is what concerns us now. If any pastor will make a list of the qualities he longs to see in the home church, he can sum them all up in a single sentence: "Our congregation ought to be spiritual and friendly, as well as active and generous." These are the very qualities that thrive in the midst of parish evangelism. Among these four marks of the ideal congregation the most vital is the first. Hence we shall start with spirituality, and to it devote our chief attention. Let the first thing come first!

INCREASE OF SPIRITUALITY

The chief fact about any home church is spirituality. This term eludes definition. When someone at Harvard asked William James what he meant by referring to a certain man as spiritual, this was the reply: "I cannot put the conception into words, but Phillips Brooks is spiritual." In like manner, who can tell what spirituality means with reference to a church? But one can see the outshining of the Spirit that dwells in the earthen vessel. Anyone familiar with "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" can tell whether a given church is spiritual or worldly.

In appraising a congregation one should look on it as a whole. With the apostle one may think of it as a body in which dwells the Spirit of God. As with a growing boy, health in the church depends on food, fresh air, and exercise.

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All of this comes through the old-fashioned means of grace, such as reading the Bible, prayer, church attendance, soul winning, and missions. If there is in the body some foreign growth, there may be need of the surgeon's knife. But in the normal church spirituality depends on the diligent use of "the outward and ordinary means of grace." They thrive best in the field where soul winning and Christian nurture have the right of way.

Soul winning leads to increased use of the Bible, both in the House of God and in the homes of His people. Emphasis on the Book should begin with the pastor. Whenever he prepares a sermon to meet a human need he should start with the Scriptures. When he wishes to present the claims of the Kingdom he should saturate his soul with the spirit of the Bible. In his leadership of the midweek service, and in his personal dealings with men, his chief reliance, under God, should be on Holy Writ. All of this ought to be obvious. Nevertheless, it is easy for the busy pastor to neglect the Book.

Congregational evangelism also leads to use of the Bible among the laymen. In private devotions and at family prayers, as in making ready to teach a Sunday-school class, there is a new incentive for reading the Scriptures. Instead of doing so from a sense of duty, and as a matter of form, Christians who are concerned about the souls of neighbors and friends come to the Bible with hearts hungering and thirsting after God. People who exercise their spiritual muscles grow hungry. Instead of exhorting lay friends to "study the Bible," guide them to it as the source of energy for Christian service.

Again, soul winning leads to prayer. Bible reading and prayer belong together. Through the Book God speaks.

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In prayer man responds. If public worship and private devotions are not to become self-centered and cold, there needs to be a definite reason for praying. Among Christian folk the ideal subject for intercessory prayer is the winning of souls, at home and abroad. Both missions and evangelism were born in prayer. Each of them thrives in this atmosphere. When the hearts of God's soldiers are aflame with zeal to win recruits, prayer becomes real and strong. The more praying there is in the name of Christ, the more power there is in His service.

For much the same reason, evangelism promotes church attendance. In a certain congregation with 300 members the pastor thought in terms of 300 at the church school, 225 at morning worship, 150 at the evening service, and 75 at the midweek meeting. By actual count those were approximately the averages for the year. The secret was simple. The people became so enthusiastic about winning recruits for the church that it was a joy to attend. The spirit of the typical member was that of the Psalmist: "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord!"

Those percentages were exceptional. In all his later experiences that minister has never approached them again. In many congregations now the figures are about a third of those above. In a church with 300 members an average for the year of 100 at Bible school and 75 at morning worship, or vice versa, would not be counted low. As for the evening service and the midweek meeting, how estimate numbers when there are no such gatherings?

Nonattendance by the members is the most immediate problem of the typical church today. A few years ago a professor of theology moved east from Holland, Michigan. In that "tulip town" almost everyone goes to the sanctuary

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on God's holy day. The landscape is dotted over with white Dutch churches, and most all of them are filled. But in our part of the world, says the same observer, many professing Christians are giving the home church "absent treatment." A few of the faithful are present whenever there is a call to worship the King, but most members come intermittently, or not at all. When church attendance lags, everything languishes.

Still further, the spiritual congregation stresses the winning of souls. Here we seem to be moving in a circle. Spirituality leads to evangelism; evangelism fosters spirituality! What logic! Even so, if the parish church is to escape the surgeon's knife there must be exercise for souls. Apart from personal evangelism church attendance may be almost selfish.

At a Bible conference the most avid sermon-tasters may live all summer on rich Biblical fare but never lift a finger all winter to point anyone Christward. At the same conference soul winners catch a vision of what the Seer of Bedford teaches in his little book, *The Jerusalem Sinner Saved*. Bunyan says that the Lord Jesus bade His disciples start witnessing at the hardest place on earth. Only a few weeks before, Jerusalem had been the scene of the Crucifixion. During the next few months there might have been another wooden cross for every disciple who tried to win recruits.

Today, in a different fashion, the most difficult place to begin doing personal work is at home. The people there may not understand the motive and the spirit. They may even sneer. As Woodrow Wilson used to say, it is harder to do your duty when your friends are sneering than when your foes are shooting. Nevertheless, the Master is saying: "Return to thine own house, and shew how great things God hath done unto thee."

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Last of all, evangelism promotes enthusiasm for missions. This too is the normal way for God's people to show their faith by their works. When the Lord Jesus told His disciples to start their personal evangelism at home He bade them also proceed to the ends of the earth. Not all could go as missionaries, but everyone could pray and give for the cause. Without a passion for winning the world, evangelism at home would be parochial. Without zeal for winning neighbors and friends at home, missions abroad would be paradoxical. But when the two activities go together, as heat and light stream from the sun, the Kingdom of God should come in the parish church.

We have now looked at five marks of the spiritual church. There are other evidences of the Indwelling Spirit, but we shall think of them under different headings. These five are sufficient for any minister or layman who wishes to behold his church as it is in the eyes of God. Such an appraisal will show that any congregation is lacking in one or more of these respects. If so, the surest way to strengthen the weak place in the line is to stress the winning of souls. Then there will be an influx of power to transform the parish and lift it to a higher level. "Let the Church be the Church!"

GROWTH OF FRIENDLINESS

According to the Christian ideal friendliness is second only to godliness. In fact, the two are inseparable. Neither can flourish apart from the other. If the people were friendly without being spiritual their meetinghouse might seem like a country club. If they tried to be spiritual without being friendly they would fail. Religion is light and warmth, not gloom and ice. While the word friendliness does not occur in the New Testament, the spirit of brotherly love is every-

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where. This is the atmosphere of the New Testament and the climate of the Apostolic Church. "Behold how these Christians love one another!"

In the latter half of the New Testament one of the favorite names for the home church is "the fellowship." The root idea of the word shows that believers in Christ have much in common. Christian fellowship manifests itself in countless forms, all of them beautiful. At the Lord's Table and elsewhere in worship the rich and the poor meet together as children of God. Sometimes we speak of such a spirit as "democratic." Why not say "Christian"? Wherever brotherly love prevails, the words of the teaching prophet find fulfillment: "They that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard."

The church ought to be a family. In Old Testament and New alike, religion starts in the home. With perhaps a single exception every church mentioned in the New Testament worshiped in a private dwelling. Again and again Paul writes about "the church in thy house," or something of the sort. Whenever a new convert unites with the church and begins to grow in Christian graces, the joy is like that of the godly home that welcomes the first-born child. In a household where all the children are boys, there is gladness if a grown son brings home a bride. When shall we learn to think of the church as home?

Every congregation ought to be a "colony of heaven."¹ The word colony is from a root meaning "to cultivate." In Paul's epistle the reference is to the Roman custom of transferring to an outlying city, such as Corinth or Philippi, a band of about three hundred citizens. In the new environment they were to cultivate the spirit of Rome. They were

¹ Philippians 3:20, Moffatt's translation.

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to "Romanize" the city. The parallel is obvious. In Philippi, for instance, the Apostle gathered a group of believers and used them as the nucleus of the church. They were to live together in Christian love and through friendliness win recruits for Christ.

This kind of statesmanship marked the work of John Wesley. When he spoke of the world as his parish he meant that the Gospel is for every man. The way to start winning the world is to establish in each community a colony of heaven. Every Christian ought to become a recruiting agent.

A recent book, *The Contemporary Christ* (1935), stresses the need of the community spirit in the local church. The author is Richard Roberts, a leader in the United Church of Canada. While he has never been a Methodist, he deplors the disappearance of the Wesleyan class meeting, with the spirit of brotherly love and zeal for winning the lost.

Such a spirit also obtains among many Baptists. In the opening chapter of the book, *The Evangelistic Church*, the Baptist writer discusses "The Lost Word." It is "concern." In the days of His flesh the Lord Jesus was concerned about the soul that had lost the way to God. According to the Gospels, whenever He employed the word lost He was speaking about one person.

How different is a good deal of preaching today! Many of us have little concern for the sinner. In Iowa at a summer conference for rural pastors a noted divine lectured for an hour on "The Master's Use of the Word Lost." There was much about teeming millions in the slums of Chicago, and ferocious rapacity on the part of vast corporations, but there was no allusion to any one person, past or present, or to any group except in the distant city. The inference was that the country pastor should strive to save the world elsewhere

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while his neighbors at home were going to hell. According to a distinguished professor of theology, "A church without a hell isn't worth a damn!"

For object lessons showing the folly of ignoring the ordinary man, look across the sea, whether to the east or the west. In Germany, Russia, and Italy the Church of yesterday largely lost the New Testament "concern" for the individual. Today the iron hand of totalitarianism shows the peril of forgetting that every man is made in the image of God. In Japan, in Persia, and in other lands known as "non-Christian," the same titanic forces are at work. They are striving to crush the spirit of the individual. In the face of such powers, what can the pastor do?

Without neglecting his other duties the minister can foster in the home church the spirit of brotherhood, and likewise awaken a "concern" for the welfare of everyone without God and without hope in the world. In order to do so, the minister may need to rediscover the individual man for whom the Saviour died. Something of this kind must have been on the heart of Woodrow Wilson when he wrote his final message to America, "The Road Away from Revolution" (1923). Six months before his death this warning appeared in the *Atlantic Monthly*: "Our civilization cannot survive materially unless it be redeemed spiritually."

According to Charles E. Jefferson,

Preaching in many pulpits has grown increasingly impersonal. . . . To urge upon the individuals in the congregation an immediate surrender to Christ as Lord seems to certain preachers somewhat irrelevant, and to others quite ill-mannered. . . . Many a man is preaching to a dwindling congregation because his sermons have lost the personal note. He chills by vague generalities, and enrages by his wholesale denunciations. . . . When other men are talking and thinking about classes and masses and races, it is more than ever in-

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cumbent on the ambassador of Christ to keep his eye on the individual man. . . .

Christianity is the religion of the brotherhood. It is also the religion of the one man, the man for whom the brotherhood exists. It is the religion of the one sheep, the one coin, the one boy. It is the religion that throws its arms around "one of these little ones," and hears angels rejoicing over every sinner who repents. It is the religion that closets each man with God, and beholds each man standing at the judgment. It is the religion that pictures the Son of God standing on the doorstep, saying, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."²

DELIGHT IN SERVICE

Another mark of the ideal congregation is Christian service. While service can never atone for lack of spirituality, neither can spirituality thrive apart from service. Wherever the church is well and strong, the people are "always abounding in the work of the Lord." The Apostle wrote these words to a city church that was spiritually sick. Its religion was self-centered. But when such folk start bringing their friends and neighbors to Christ, parish ills begin to disappear. From the viewpoint of "church management" the way to deal with church maladies is to promote evangelism.

No other kind of service could be more Christian. Soul winning appeals to the strong man, the earnest woman, the zealous youth or maiden. It affords an opportunity for the exercise of every gift or grace. On the other hand, the work requires no special brilliance, no extensive training, no costly equipment. The call is simply for an enthusiastic Christian who longs to have everyone in the community share the joys of fellowship with Christ. Whenever a strong believer has

² *The Building of the Church*. The Macmillan Company, 1913, pp. 81-115.

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the will to do personal work, his heart is sure to find the way.

As a rule our laymen have not enlisted in tasks worthy of their powers. Their church work may not be distinctly Christian. Some of it may be like running a merry-go-round, where young folk ride for excitement. Under a "live-wire parson" the people may become charged with zeal for the superfluous. In many a parish the sons and daughters of Martha seem to be "cumbered about much serving."

At other churches the activity is vital, but the spirit is scarcely Christian. Instead of displaying "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control," the workers try to live on their nerves. Sometimes the observer feels that the body of the church is afflicted with inflammatory rheumatism and Saint Vitus's dance.

Over in a neighboring parish the men are doing almost nothing. Their religion is largely passive. It lacks power. Just as water that stands still in a pool is useless and even harmful, so does religious life that has no outlet accomplish nothing for the Kingdom. However, water that lies motionless has potential power. Under God, the man to set useless waters free, and then guide them into channels of human service, is the minister. If he does so he will discover that the spiritual life of the laity is taking care of itself, or rather that it is safe in the hands of the Lord. When waters flow they tend to become pure and wholesome.

The difference between the church that lives to save others and the one that exists for itself is like that between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea. In olden times the Sea of Galilee sent out streams of water that caused the Jordan Valley to blossom like a garden, whereas the Dead Sea re-

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served for itself all that it received from the inflowing river; hence the surrounding land became parched like a desert. But there is hope even for the Dead Sea. Of late it has been yielding up vast stores of mineral treasure. According to the seer,³ God is waiting to transform those sodden waters into a means of blessing to mankind. This is an allegory showing us how to revive the church.

INSPIRATION FOR GIVING

Another mark of the ideal congregation is Christlike giving. The reference is chiefly to the contributions in the half of the weekly envelope marked "For Others." Among all the evidences that God is having His way in the church, the giving of money may be the least. At any rate, one puts it last. Spirituality, friendliness, service, and giving!

Nevertheless, liberality or the lack of it is an index of church health or sickness. While the minister should not know how much or how little the members contribute as individuals, he should watch the total gifts, week by week, especially for benevolences. He knows that when the hearts of the people are right toward God, and full of zeal for winning the unchurched, the officers have little difficulty in raising money.

If the church has a program that is worthy, the members should give through their own treasury more largely than through all other agencies combined. The cause of the Kingdom is more vital than anything else on earth. Much of the Kingdom's work is done through the parish church. For instance, the best way to support world-wide missions, as a rule, is through one's own denomination. Any evangelical

³ Ezekiel 47:1-12.

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church affords its people unlimited opportunities to advance the Kingdom.

To be a Christian means to be like Christ: "Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it." This is why the most spiritually minded people love to give through their church. Many of them think in terms of the tithe, plus free-will offerings. This way of computing is not obligatory, but it is the only method that seems to work. In the recent past some church leaders experimented with all sorts of substitutes and compromises, only to discover that they are makeshifts and failures. But when people tithe there is money enough in the treasury.

"Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it." These words are from the last book in the Old Testament, a book about the need of a revival. Many of us ought to study the book of Malachi.

The book of Acts, likewise, devotes much attention to the giving of money through the church. From that time to this, the winning of souls and the giving of money have gone hand in hand. Those who do the most work for Christ give the most money through His church.

We have looked at four outer marks of the ideal congregation. If we study them closely we shall see that they all are due to the Indwelling Christ. In Him alone the church lives and moves and has its being. Wherever He has His way there is spirituality and friendliness, Christian service and hearty giving.

As an object lesson of how soul winning fosters every Christian grace, think of a church in the Middle West. A

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few years ago it had slightly more than twelve hundred resident members. While certain factors were unique, the congregation was much like many another. There were all sorts of minor problems and needs, many of which related to money.

But there was no crisis or friction. The work of recruiting, for instance, was going forward much as usual. Still the officers were not satisfied. At the January meeting one of them proposed as a motto: "One Hundred New Members Before Easter." The date that year was the ninth of April.

The pastor did not believe in numerical goals and whirlwind campaigns. But he had the habit of referring important proposals to the lay officers. They had not been thinking in any such terms. But the audacity of the motto led them to feel that it must be from God. They voted unanimously for its adoption, and started at once to lay their plans. They decided to enlist the congregation, under the leadership of the pastor. The first step was to post a letter to every household, explaining the slogan and asking for the names of persons in the community who had no church home. The responses were gratifying.

This was the only item of extra expense throughout the twelve weeks. There was no unusual publicity, no sounding of trumpets, no new organization. The only help from without was by a neighboring minister who preached twice during Holy Week. Under God, the reliance was on sermons by the pastor, mainly at the Sunday services; prayers by the people, both at home and in church; and personal work by the laymen, especially the officers and their wives. The program was the one that lies at the heart of this book. However, such a campaign comes only once in years, after God's people have been schooled in evangelism.

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The results were slow in appearing. When everybody had been at work for seven weeks the number of accessions was no larger than usual during the harvest season. But on a Sunday morning in March the pastor's sermon was about the Deity of Christ. The stress was on His power to save because He is the Son of God. Earlier in the hour the minister had explained about the after-meeting in the study, which adjoined the chancel. In the closing sentences of the sermon he repeated this invitation and appealed for a definite decision, then and there.

After the benediction there was a hush, as the people bowed down for silent prayer. Then the aisles began to be thronged with persons coming forward. Ere long the room appointed was full to overflowing and everyone moved out to the front part of the sanctuary. Apart from the officers, and other members who came forward with timid friends, practically all were there because of personal evangelism. They believed in the Saviour about whom they had just heard.

That morning fifty adults confessed their faith in the Christ of the Fourth Gospel: "These are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in His name." This had been the text of the minister's sermon.

Between that day and Easter there were frequent accessions. After almost every service, especially on Sunday morning, persons came forward. Most of them had already made their decision, because of personal work. Others needed further help. During those twelve weeks before Easter the total number of new members was 206. Of these, 106 came on confession of faith, forty-six receiving adult baptism. Of the 100 who joined the church in other ways,

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many reaffirmed the faith that had grown cold. In short, there was a revival.

Afterward, in looking back, the minister could see that when the people became concerned about their friends and neighbors the problems of the parish faded away. On the other hand, there was more use of the Bible, more praying, increased church attendance, and greater zeal for missions. There was a new spirit of friendliness, and a new joy in giving. There was no difficulty in raising the budget for current expenses, and in reducing the debt on the church edifice. Through soul winning the church had become "stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord."

The revival that comes through soul winning manifests itself differently in each parish. But there are always visible evidences that the Spirit of God is having His way in the hearts of the people. From this point of view, which is apostolic, revival flourishes in days of evangelism. Bearing fruit is good for the tree. This is an inference from the vision of the seer: "On either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations."

The spirit of evangelism should prevail from month to month. There should be no closed season, no fallow period. But at certain times of the year, such as the period before Easter, there should be unusual fruitfulness. It comes because the Spirit of God keeps working constantly through pastor and people, as well as the various societies, notably the church school. In short, evangelism and revival are not so much matters of method as channels through which the Spirit of God operates with power from on high.

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So it was in the Apostolic Church. The saints fed their hearts and minds daily from the Book, enjoyed meeting together for social worship, and kept their spiritual muscles strong by engaging in personal evangelism. However, they did it all not for the sake of keeping well and hearty, but to show their gratitude for God's gift of His Son. They longed to share with friends and neighbors the joys of redeeming grace. Apostolic evangelism was no mere spring tonic.

Centuries afterward these principles shone forth in the experience of John Wesley. "There was a man sent from God, whose name was John." On the evening of May 24, 1739, the heart of Wesley was "strangely warmed." In a year when Easter falls on April 5, as it does in 1942, Pentecost is on May 24. As we set apart the day for the glory of the Holy Spirit, let us give thanks for that other hour of worship when John Wesley girded his soul for high adventure in evangelism.

This trail would soon lead us far afield. In every land abroad, as well as here at home, there is need of life and power from above. Over in Scotland prior to the outbreak of the second World War, a leading divine exclaimed, "The worst thing about this generation is that it has never witnessed a revival of religion." One reason is that many of us have almost ceased trying to win souls. When that revival comes, as come it must if the Faith is to endure and wax mighty, the beginning will doubtless be in some parish church. The leader may be a minister as yet unknown.

With such heaven-born ideals is it any wonder that the stoutest heart quails? When the minister surveys the parish, with all its difficulties, and remembers his own weaknesses, he is tempted to turn aside to lesser things.

Then let the servant of God think of his calling in terms

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of climbing a mountain, and of his life in the spirit of adventure. His cry may be that of Caleb, "Give me this mountain"; or of John Knox, "Give me Scotland, or I die!" God took each of them at his word, and made him strong.

When George Adam Smith was young he once made a steep, hazardous ascent in the Alps. He felt secure, for he was in the hands of two stalwart guides. One of them climbed up just ahead and the other followed closely after.

At last, breathless, after seven hours of toiling upward, they came near to the summit. It consisted of "splintered rocks protruding from the snow." Wishing to let the young stranger catch the first vista of earth and heaven, the guide in front asked him to go ahead.

Forgetful of the gale that was blowing in from the other side of the rocks, the young man leaped to his feet. But the chief guide dragged him down, exclaiming: "On your knees, sir! You are never safe here except on your knees!"

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APPENDIX

CASE STUDIES IN PERSONAL EVANGELISM¹

1. Three boys are in the last year of high school. All are in the same class at the church school. A is bright, handsome, popular. He is captain of his football team, chairman of the dramatic committee, in demand for social occasions. How influence him to become a Christian?

2. B is studious, easily leading his class. All respect him but he has few friends. The boys call him "a dig." How win him for Christ?

3. C is a scrapper—conceited, domineering, unpopular. He is strong-willed, persistent, voluble. At school he is a problem. How approach him religiously?

4. A girl eighteen years of age is employed in a dry-goods shop. She is not a professing Christian but she belongs to the girls' club. She comes to the middle-aged pastor and confesses that she has stolen various sums amounting to \$500. Exposure with punishment is imminent. Her parents, both Christians, know nothing of the matter. Hitherto she seems to have led a clean life. Now she cries: "I have been a wicked girl! What shall I do?"

5. A girl of nineteen is a senior in the high school. She plans to attend the state university next year. She is a good

¹ To be used in a discussion class limited to mature Christian workers. For a few of these cases the writer is indebted to various students and other friends.

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scholar, bright and popular. She belongs to the dramatic club; attends dances at home and school; does not smoke; has several boy friends but no favorite. She attends church and Bible school regularly but is not a professing Christian. Her father is an elder and her mother teaches a Bible class. They have talked with her about being a Christian, but she puts them off, smilingly, giving no reason. They ask the minister to help them. He is twenty-five and is married. When he makes his next afternoon call he finds her at home. She is alone. What should he do?

6. A young man is twenty-two, unmarried, of average intelligence and education. The other members of the household belong to the church. Until eighteen months ago he felt that he had a Christian experience; he enjoyed communing with God in prayer and found uplift in public worship. Now all is changed. He has stopped daily prayers and sees no reason why he should attend church. His membership has lapsed. The only explanation is disillusionment concerning the former pastor, who left of his own accord a year ago. What should the new minister do?

7. A young woman of twenty-five, a college graduate, is a most attractive personality. She is successful as a business woman in a city not her home. She has a Christian background, and young friends who are active in the city church. She has excellent ideals and habits, but no personal religious experience and no interest in the church. The pastor is forty years of age, and unmarried.

8. A young man thirty years old is intelligent, clean-cut, moral. His life is an incentive to other young people. In all his dealings, business and social, he goes the second mile. He seems to be leading a Christian life, but he makes no profession. Through his observations of nature he believes in

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God, but as an impersonal force. He admits the fact of sin but sees no need of Christ. The young man is not antagonistic but he sees no reason for confessing the Saviour. After a long conversation he says to the pastor, "I wish I could accept Him, but I can't."

9. A woman of thirty is principal of the town high school. She is the ideal of many girls. Her standards, personal and social, are high. She lives for others, enthusiastically. She recognizes that the church is the strongest moral force in the community, but personally she is indifferent. She is not a professing Christian, and she attends irregularly. If she were an active Christian her influence would be far-reaching.

10. A man thirty years old is a skilled machinist in a responsible position. He was formerly an active member of the church but he became alienated by coldness and apparent lack of Christian spirit on the part of the pastor and people in the congregation to which he formerly belonged. Now he is in another community. He is bitter toward the Church in general, but still he is concerned about religion, theoretically.

11. A physician is forty years of age. The minister has been pleading with him to accept Christ and join the church. Always he answers, "Sometime I will." His wife is a member; she sings in the choir and is head of the primary department in the church school. Their only child is a daughter eleven years old. She is active in Junior Christian Endeavor and has just been confirmed. She comes to the pastor and says, "Why doesn't Daddy join the church?"

12. A man of forty used to be a regular attendant at church and Bible school. One night twenty years ago when he was sitting with three other young men in the rear pew their whispering annoyed the minister, who rebuked them pub-

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licly. Since then none of the four has shown any concern about church or religion.

13. A man forty-five years of age belonged to a downtown church and attended regularly for years. Recently he has decided that he is not needed or wanted; that the atmosphere is cold, and that everyone neglects him. He says that the church is a fashionable club and that ministers are money-grabbers. If any clergyman seems to be genuine, he is an exception!

14. A pastor in calling finds the father of a Sunday-school pupil troubled about the Virgin Birth. In a later call the minister learns that the root of the trouble is deeper. The father's past is black. In that first call, how should the pastor have answered the implied question about the Creed?

15. A minister sitting in a barber shop hears a half-intoxicated carpenter swearing profusely. The barber tries in vain to stop him, because the parson is present. The minister knows the carpenter and the family, though not intimately. What should he do, if anything?

16. On his way home at night a clergyman sees a neighbor, not a churchman, staggering down the street. Soon he stumbles and falls into the gutter. At his home near by are his wife and two growing daughters, whom the minister knows slightly. What should he do?

17. A widow past middle age has lost recently her only child, a grown son, in a fearful accident. She has no other means of support. She was formerly active in the church but now she never attends. She has lost her faith. She says that a God of love would never slay her son, or suffer him to be slain.

18. A physician sixty years of age was reared in a Christian home. He leads a moral life and believes in God as revealed

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in nature. He asks the Lord to bless the means of healing. But he has questions about the Creed. Especially does he balk at the idea of hell. His only child is a grown daughter, a devoted Christian. He says that nothing she might do could turn him against her, and that God too is a Father.

19. A minister in London is preaching in the open air. He is stressing the goodness of God. One of the hearers, whom the minister knows personally, has lost his family and home in an air raid. Because of his own injuries he is unable to earn a living. In the midst of the sermon he shouts, "How can you talk to me about the goodness of God?"

20. A man of middle age was dying. He sent for the parish minister and said to him: "One night years ago you preached about the mercy of God. I was deeply moved and I walked home with you. I wanted to talk about Christ but the minute we left the church door you began to crack jokes about serious subjects. I became disgusted with religion and ever since then I have lived a rotten life. Do you think I will be damned? If I am, will my blood be on your hands?" If you were that minister, what would you say, and do?

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*The asterisk indicates a book in line with the preceding chapter.

EVANGELISM IN THE HOME CHURCH

ANDREW W. BLACKWOOD

This book purposes to assist the average minister to extend the evangelistic program in the local church. It takes the point of view that revival is most effective and long-lasting if furthered through various types of personal evangelism.

The author holds that evangelism should be centered in the home church under the leadership of the pastor, assisted by the congregation's spiritually-minded laymen, both men and women. He first considers the various trends in the local church and then points out in detail how an effective evangelistic program may be integrated with the local church's various activities.

Throughout the volume Dr. Blackwood deals practically with the situation as it presents itself today. He has drawn freely from his own experiences and those of his friends. These experiences are often considered as "case studies" and thereby vividly illustrate vital points.

